



Child's welfare is paramount

If you are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child you are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation.

You may worry that you have misunderstood the situation or that the information is not true.

You may also wonder whether your reporting of the incident would jeopardise your colleague's career.

However, you must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.



Summary

In summary, once you have established that you have concern that a child may be suffering from harm or who may be at risk of suffering from harm you must:

- Not press the child for more information
- Write down the details of your concern as soon as is practicably possible
- Report your concern to the designated senior person (or their deputy if they are not available)



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If You Have Concern

Refresher Guide



Knowing how to respond

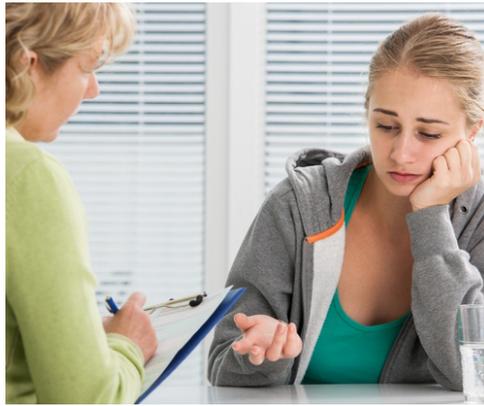
Often teachers and support staff will be the first to notice changes in a pupil's presentation or behaviour. This can lead to a suspicion or concern that the pupil is suffering from harm or may be at risk of suffering from harm. Knowing how to respond to and how not to respond to this concern is vital in helping to ensure pupils are safeguarded.

Is there a safeguarding concern?

Where it is not clear that there may be a risk of harm to a child, you should try to establish whether there is a safeguarding concern and what the child's perspective is.

Do not investigate

It is not your role to 'investigate' your concerns. An allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so you must not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking child leading questions or physically examining the child.



Don't make promises

All matters relating to safeguarding are confidential; however, you must never guarantee confidentiality to a child. You must reassure the child – and that includes telling them who will be told.

Do not discuss with colleagues

Your concern should only be shared on a need to know basis. You should not discuss your concerns with colleagues, friends or family. You should report your concern directly to the designated senior person or their deputy as soon as is practicably possible.

Do not wait

Any suspicion or concern that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, must be acted on as soon as is practicably possible - do not keep suspicions to yourself.

Designated senior person

The designated senior person is the first person you should talk to if you have concerns or if a child makes a disclosure to you.

They have been given specific training to offer support and advice, and will also know whether to and how to refer to other agencies. Please note; the 'designated senior person' role may have a different title in your organisation.

Recording

You must record what you have seen or heard in order to support your concern (your organisation will have a form for this). This should be done as soon as is practicably possible and within 24 hours. As far as is possible, you should record verbatim what was said and by whom, and distinguish between fact and opinion. It is also important to note the date and time and location and all those present. If you notice any physical injuries, these should also be noted.



Concerns about a colleague

If you have concern about a colleague, your actions should be exactly the same as if the concern was about the child's friends or family. That is to say you must immediately report your concern to the designated senior person.

May need to provide evidence

You should be aware that you may be required to give evidence in any subsequent prosecution, and that you may have to refer to and/or produce your notes.

Immediate protection

The law allows all people who work with children and young people to take all reasonable steps to offer immediate protection to a child at risk of harm, for example, from a violent parent.

