

## ReFocus Safeguarding Children Policy

ReFocus is an organisation which works to promote the health and well-being of all children.

- All staff working with children through ReFocus will have a current CRB check.
- All staff working with children should familiarise themselves with current safeguarding and child protection policies and systems in their partner/client organisations.
- All staff are responsible for children while working for ReFocus and must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to.

No member of staff should be left alone with a child where they cannot be observed by Others.

Where possible there should always be at least two adults present with a group of children. It is vital that the ratio of adult to child is adequate to ensure safety. For children under 8 the ration should be no more than 1:8; for children under 5 it should be no more than 1:6.

Staff should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose. Children should not be collected by people other than their parents unless notification has been received. If a child is not collected after a session it is reasonable to wait approximately half an hour for a parent or carer to arrive. If the parent or carer cannot be contacted, staff should contact the relevant Children & Families Duty Team or the police and request assistance.

Individuals within the organisation and staff working on a temporary basis need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of that organisation. They should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children and where there are concerns about a child's welfare. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns. However, you **MUST NOT** discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- Where sexual abuse or sexual exploitation is suspected
- where Organised or Multiple Abuse is suspected
- where Fabricated or Induced illness (previously known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected
- where Female Genital Mutilation is the concerned
- in cases of suspect Forced Marriage
- where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations **YOU MUST**:

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared - do not offer false confidentiality.
- Reassure the child that:
  - they have done the right thing in telling you;
  - they have not done anything wrong;
- Tell the child what you are going to do next and explain that you will need to get help to keep him/her safe.
- DO NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone

If you have a Child Protection concern you should consult the appropriate person or report it.

Because of your observations of, or information received you may become concerned about a child who has not spoken to you.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

**If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns.**

Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child's need for protection.