

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

MusicSpace works with children & young people and families as part of its activities. These include providing music therapy sessions for children & young people both at our centre in Bristol and in a range of other locations in the region.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children & young people who receive services from MusicSpace. This includes the siblings of children who receive our services and the children of adults who use our services
- to provide parents, staff & volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of MusicSpace including paid staff, sessional therapists, volunteers, music therapy students and the board of trustees.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England, namely:

- Working together to safeguard children (Department for Education 2018) The current guidance updated online 1st July 2022.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, Department for Education 2021, 2022 & 2023
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations, which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- Children & Families Act 2014
- The Care Act 2014 Care & Support Statutory Guidance (updated 2016)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2018

MusicSpace recognizes that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs of other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a nominated child protection/safeguarding lead, a deputy child protection/safeguarding lead and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying or harassment that does arise
- Ensuring an effective online safety statement and related procedures
- Sharing information about child protection and safeguarding best practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- Recruiting trustees, staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against trustees, staff and volunteers appropriately
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures including:

- Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's well-being
- Dealing with allegations of abuse against a child or young person
- Role of the designated safeguarding officer
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Safer recruitment policy and procedures
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers

- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Online safety statement and procedures for responding to concerns about online abuse
- Attendance statement and procedures
- Photography and image sharing guidance
- Child protection records retention and storage policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Online working statement

This information can be found in the following documents:

- MusicSpace Core Policies
- MusicSpace Staff Handbook
- MusicSpace HR Policies

MusicSpace Practice, Responsibilities & Procedures

MusicSpace will:

- Maintain a clear commitment to the importance of safeguarding and protecting children's welfare
- Make available a clear statement of MusicSpace employees and volunteer's responsibilities towards children
- Demonstrate a clear line of accountability within MusicSpace for work on safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children
- Show that service development takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and be informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families
- Maintain regular staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Demonstrate safe recruitment procedures

A commitment to the importance of safeguarding

To ensure commitment at Senior Management level, three officers will be identified who will champion the importance of safeguarding and promote the welfare of children throughout the organisation. This will normally be the Director of MusicSpace (MS) a member of the Board of Trustees (Kim Smith) and the Clinical Lead (Deputy Director) Sarah Newell. They will:

- have a sound working knowledge of relevant legislation and guidance with respect to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- be responsible for communicating to all trustees, staff and volunteers the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- hold therapists and other staff to account for the contribution of their services to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare through regular monitoring
- ensure staff have effective working relationships with other agencies in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- identify and organise training needs of staff and volunteers and communicate these to the management team
- ensure that safeguarding discussions are included within clinical supervision sessions for the therapists

A clear statement of MusicSpace employees' responsibilities towards children is available for all staff

MusicSpace will ensure that all therapists and other staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and know what action should be taken if they have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child. These arrangements will be set out as an appendix and include:

- ensuring that all staff are aware of a contact number or person (the service designated officer) who should be contacted for advice or to make a referral to when there are concerns about a child's welfare or safety
- incorporating staff responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children into the service plans
- fostering a culture of openness and shared communication where staff are actively encouraged to express any early concerns about the welfare of a child.

A clear line of accountability within MusicSpace for work on safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children

MusicSpace has appointed two named officers at Senior Management level and a deputy officer who are able to offer advice to staff if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

Service development takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families

MusicSpace will consider:

- the impact of music therapy on children's safety and welfare
- how children are to be kept safe whilst using services, for example, considering health and safety regulations online safety and ways in which existing services can be improved
- how the views of children and their families might be sought with regard to planning services in the light of all safeguarding procedures and their development
- Group work (Child-on-child abuse) (Appendix 2)

Staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

In exercising its responsibility towards safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, MusicSpace will ensure that:

- all trustees and staff (including volunteers) participate regularly in relevant training tailored towards their individual roles
- therapists are kept up to date with changes in statutory requirements
- Staff will be made aware that local safeguarding procedures can be accessed on the internet at <https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/> (Bristol Children Safeguarding Board) & through an online app NHS Guide Safeguarding
- training helps all staff understand both their own roles and responsibilities and those of other professionals and organisations for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- training enhances staff awareness of race, culture and disability and the impact they have on family life

All MusicSpace employees working directly with children will be required to attend level three safeguarding awareness training courses. Training needs to be updated every three years. MusicSpace



will ensure that the training meets the requirements of statutory guidance. Appropriate documentation will record what training has been received.

All MusicSpace Trustees must undertake Safeguarding for Trustees from a children's specialist in their first year. Safeguarding updates to be undertaken every three years. MusicSpace does not currently use volunteers in child contact roles.

Safer recruitment

MusicSpace has policies and procedures in place to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children. Safe recruitment means thoroughly scrutinising information provided by applicants and referees; taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies; verifying identity through DBS checks and any academic or vocational qualifications; obtaining independent professional and character references; checking previous employment history and experience and that a person has the health and physical capacity for the job; and carrying out a face to face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as their suitability for the post.

All MusicSpace therapists must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council and have their own Professional Indemnity Insurance.

All staff who are recruited to work with children or likely to have access to children within their work environment or in the course of carrying out their role, will be vetted during the recruitment and selection process to ensure that there are no known causes for concern. All offers of employment where the post holder will be working with (or have contact in the course of their work with) children and young people will be subject to the appropriate level of checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service. These checks will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Contact details:

Nominated child protection lead:

Name: Michele Scott

Contact: T: 0117 9531731

E: Director@musicSPACE.org

Deputy child protection lead:

Name: Sarah Newell

Contact: T: 0117 9531731

E: sarah.newell@musicSPACE.org

Senior lead for safeguarding and child protection:

Name: Kim Smith

Contact: T: 0117 9531731

E: kim.smith@musicSPACE.org

Bristol Social Services Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 01454 615 165

Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre (CEOP): www.ceop.police.uk

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

CAMHS Getting Advice Team: 0117 919 2360

Monitoring and review

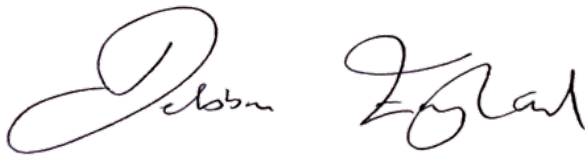
We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice **annually**.

The policy was last reviewed on:

Date: 28/11/2023

Chair of Trustees:

Signed:



Chair of MusicSpace

Date of next review: October 24

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Responsibilities of designated officers

Appendix 2: Employee's responsibilities in noting and reporting concerns

Appendix 3: Managing concerns about or allegations made against staff or volunteers

Appendix 4: Information sharing

Appendix 5: Child protection records retention and storage policy and procedures

Appendix 6: Safer recruitment policy and procedures

Appendix 7: Online Safety

Appendix 1: Responsibilities of designated officers

The designated safeguarding officers will:

- Keep up to date with training and information
- Follow MusicSpace procedures for reporting concerns. Records will be made immediately noting the date, time, places and people who were present. The officers will advise the child's family that a referral to Social Services is being made, unless this puts a child at further risk, for example in the case of sexual abuse



- Alert appropriate agencies and share relevant information where appropriate, including the following:
 1. Ensure timely external reporting of incidents to charity commission and funders takes place
 2. Ensure that individuals of concern are referred to DBS
 3. Ensure quality assurance and annual reporting to Trustees

If a concern involves a member of MusicSpace staff or volunteer, the designated officers must be informed immediately on: 0117 9531731.

If a concern involves the Director the designated member of the Board of Trustees (Kim Smith) and the chairperson of the group must be informed immediately - Email: trustees@musicpace.org

Bristol, North Somerset and South Glos Social Services Emergency Duty Team: 01454 615 165 (out of hours)

Children:

North Somerset: Professional consultation line - 01275 888 690
Child Protection team - 01275 888 808

Bristol: CAMHS Getting Advice Team: 0117 919 2360
First Response: 0117 903 6444

South Glos: Safeguarding number: 01454 866000
<https://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/category/children/i-am-a-professional/>

Adults:

North Somerset: Care Connect - 01275 888801

Bristol: Care Direct - 0117 922 2700

South Glos: Safeguarding number: 01454 868007

Appendix 2: Employee's responsibilities in noting and reporting concerns

Identifying concerns

All MusicSpace staff should be aware that children can experience more than one type of abuse which can have serious and long-lasting impacts on their lives; physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect. Each has its own specific warning indicators, which you should be alert to. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) statutory guidance sets out full descriptions.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 states that being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, may breach children's rights, as set out in the Human Rights Act.

Discrimination may also breach the Equality Act 2010

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, you should call the police on 999

Definitions of Abuse (from the Department of Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021).

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

All staff and volunteers should be aware that abuse, neglect, harassment and safeguarding issues are rarely

standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

- Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is

happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

- Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs of Abuse

A list of exemplar indicators of child abuse is provided below. This is a list of some possible indicators of abuse. The list is not exhaustive.

N.B. Bear in mind that these indicators, particularly those relating to children's behaviour, may not be indicative of abuse. They should alert staff and volunteers to the possibility of abuse and not be taken as definitive evidence:

You should be concerned if a child:

- Has a bruise or injury which is unusual for example on a part of the body which is not normally prone to such injuries, for example, on the cheeks
- Has Injuries which require but have not received medical attention
- Has cigarette burns or bite marks
- Has frequent minor injuries explained as accidents or with no explanation
- Is becoming unusually dirty or unkempt
- Displays unexplained changes in behaviour either over time or suddenly, for example, becoming aggressive, quiet, anxious or withdrawn
- Runs away/goes missing
- Presents non-attendance at school, projects or activities
- Appears not to trust certain adults for example parent, carer, staff member with whom you would usually expect them to have or once had a close relationship
- Displays age inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Displays sexually inappropriate behaviour, for example public masturbation or seeking physical comfort from staff when not overtly distressed
- Is in a relationship with an older partner when the young person is aged under 16.
- Is being discouraged from socialising with others or is unable to make friends
- Shows changes to eating patterns
- Develops a disturbed sleeping pattern for example nightmares, bed wetting
- Self-harms or attempts to self-harm

Domestic abuse

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 makes it clear that domestic abuse:

- can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional
- can impact on children through seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it through their own intimate relationships.

Children exposed to Domestic Abuse may also display the following:

- they may become anxious or depressed
- they may have difficulty sleeping
- they may complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches
- they may start to wet their bed
- they may behave as though they are much younger than they are
- they may have problems with school
- they may become aggressive or they may internalise their distress and withdraw from other people
- they may have a lowered sense of self-worth
- older children may begin to play truant or start to use alcohol or drugs
- they may begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves

Children may also feel angry, guilty, insecure, alone, frightened, powerless or confused. They may have ambivalent feelings towards both the abuser and the non-abusing parent.

Child-on-child abuse:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 makes it clear that child-on-child abuse is likely to include, but may not be limited to

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence), Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response. It might not be abusive – but children still need to know it is illegal- whilst non-consensual is illegal and abusive. UKCIS provides detailed advice about sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and videos.
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Children with special educational needs and disabilities or health issues

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs, and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content or the consequences of repeating the content/behaviours.

In addition the following should be considered:

- Human trafficking/modern slavery/commercial exploitation
- Forced marriage- a marriage in which one or both of the parties is married without their consent or against their will
- Female genital mutilation- where the female genital organs are injured or changed with no medical reason
- PREVENT – Preventing radicalisation to extremism

If you are suspicious of any kind of abuse, you should inform a designated officer.

Disclosure

You should be aware that children may disclose abuse in a variety of ways:

- directly– making specific verbal statements about what's happened to them
- indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong
- behaviourally – displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate)
- non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways.

Helping children disclose abuse:

Some children and young people are reluctant to seek help because they feel they don't have anyone to turn to for support. And some children may only make partial disclosures of abuse. Children and young people who have been abused may want to tell someone, but not have the exact words to do so.

MusicSpace recognises the importance of creating an environment where children and young people are comfortable about speaking out if anything is worrying them. You should listen, watch, understand and respond appropriately so the child gets the help, support and protection they need.

Responding to disclosures

- If a child tells you they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child.
- It's vital that any child who is trying to disclose abuse feels that they are being listened to and taken seriously.
- It's important to maintain an unbiased approach when responding to disclosures
- It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child. You will need to share these with the child protection lead.

Making notes

It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child. You will need to share these with your nominated child protection lead.

Include:

- the child's details (name, age, address)
- what the child said or did that gave you cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, write down their exact words)
- any information the child has given you about the alleged abuser.

Reporting concerns

- The moment a child has disclosed information to a MusicSpace employee, which raises concerns; this information must be shared as soon as possible with one of the designated officers verbally and using the safeguarding reporting (appendix 8). After this the therapist will be invited to a safeguarding meeting with one of the designated safeguarding leads to discuss next steps and take action where required. All reporting forms must be password protected electronically on MusicSpace's chosen database. The designated officers are:
 - Michele Scott, Director of MusicSpace, Designated Safeguarding Officer (0117 9531731) - Director@musicpace.org.uk
 - Sarah Newell, Clinical Lead & Deputy Director, MusicSpace Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (0117 9531731) - sarah.newell@musicpace.org.uk
 - Kim Smith, Trustee, kim.smith@musicpace.org
- If you are working in an outreach setting e.g. School or Opportunity Group, you must inform your line manager there and adhere to that organisation's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures in addition to informing one of the three named MusicSpace officers at the earliest opportunity possible. A MusicSpace officer must be kept updated on any child protection case.
- If working in a group setting, include any other children/young people who may have witnessed the disclosure in the safeguarding report to the DSL for MusicSpace.

- Do not promise confidentiality.
- The designated officer will complete a MusicSpace safeguarding reporting form with as much detail and accuracy as possible and will try to establish the basic facts.
- A child protection referral will be made to the Safeguarding Children's Service of the relevant local Social Services:
 - Bristol Social Services First Response Team: 0117 903 6444;
 - North Somerset Safeguarding Board: 01275 888 808
 - South Gloucestershire Safeguarding: 01454 866000
 - Bath and north East Somerset Council: 01225 39 61 11 or 01225 47 79 29
 - Safeguarding Children in Gloucestershire: 01452 42 6565
- **If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, you should call the police on 999**, you can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline – help@nspcc.org.uk or 0808 800 5000.

Appendix 3: Managing concerns about or allegations made against staff or volunteers

Reporting concerns

Responsible person:

Michele Scott (Director) is responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse about members of staff or volunteers. If there is a concern about the Director, it should be reported to the safeguarding lead on the board of trustees Kim Smith or the Local Authority Designated Officer Nicola Laird

- Michele Scott: director@musicSPACE.org/ 0117 9531731
- Kim Smith: kim.smith@musicSPACE.org
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Nicola Laird 0117 903 7795.

Whistleblowing:

If staff or volunteers have concerns about the behaviour of others within MusicSpace but feel unable to report an incident within the organisation they can make a report to:

- Local Authority Designated Officer, Nicola Laird 0117 903 7795.
- the police
- local child protection services Bristol City Council First Response Team on 0117 903 6444, or Emergency Duty team, out of hours 01454 615 165
- contacting the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285

Responding to concerns and allegations

We take any concerns raised about staff or volunteers seriously, regardless of who the person is or how long they've been involved with the organisation.

This procedure should be applied when there is such an allegation or concern that a person who works with children, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse (i.e. physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect). These include concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people.

An allegation against a member of staff may arise from a number of sources (e.g. a report from a child, a concern raised by another adult in the organisation, or a complaint by a parent). It may also arise in the context of the member of staff and their life outside work or at home.

Initial action by person receiving or identifying an allegation or concern

The person to whom an allegation or concern is first reported should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind.

They should not:

- Investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification;
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations;
- Promise confidentiality, but give assurance that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

They should:

- Make a written record of the information (where possible in the child's own words), including the time, date and place of incident/s, persons present and what was said;
- Sign and date the written record;
- Immediately report the matter to the designated senior manager, or the deputy in their absence or; where the designated senior manager is the subject of the allegation, report to the deputy or other appropriate senior manager.

Initial action by the designated senior manager

When informed of a concern or allegation, the designated senior manager should not investigate the matter or interview the member of staff, child concerned or potential witnesses.

They should:

- Obtain written details of the concern / allegation, signed and dated by the person receiving (not the child / adult making the allegation);
- Approve and date the written details;
- Record any information about times, dates and location of incident/s and names of any potential witnesses.
- Record discussions about the child and/or member of staff, any decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.



The allegation should then be reported immediately (within one working day of the allegation being made) to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO will then take appropriate action (see Bristol City Council's Safeguarding Partnership Procedures Manual)

Confidentiality and support

You should make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of all parties while an allegation or concern is being investigated. Make sure everyone involved in the investigation understands this.

Consider how best to support the children involved, their parents or carers, and individuals who have had an allegation made against them. This includes:

- telling parents or carers and the employee or volunteer concerned about the allegation as soon as possible (as long as this does not place any children at further risk of harm)
- telling them how you are going to manage the allegation
- keeping everyone informed about the progress and outcomes of the case.