

What School Staff Should do if a Child is in Danger or at Risk of Harm

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the designated safeguarding lead, the designated safeguarding lead should be informed, as soon as possible, that a referral has been made.

Staff should refer to [National Police Chief's Council guidance](#) on when to call the police to ensure that calls are appropriate and timely.

Early Help

Staff may be required to support other agencies in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead professional. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

If a Child Discloses Information to You

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being neglected and or abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a child talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that **you must** pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in immediately the child may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it till the very end of the conversation, the child may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During your conversation with the child:

- Allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and do not overreact – the child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'.
- Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child.
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the child's mother think about all this.
- At an appropriate time tell the child that, in order to help them you must pass the information on.
- You should then record quickly what the child has said in the words they used and seek advice. As a rule of thumb, cases of physical and sexual abuse will always be referred to social services on the same day and they have a duty to investigate under

section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Staff should not discuss their concerns with the child or the parents/carers without first seeking advice in these circumstances.

- Report to the DSL as soon as possible. If the child could be in imminent danger, this must be reported immediately.

You should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (such as on a child in need or child protection plan).

You must understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

You should only discuss concerns with the designated person, head teacher or head of education. That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Name	Role	Email	Mobile
Louise Bethal	Headteacher – Spires	louise.bethel@five-rivers.org	07525 909328
Jo Dennis-Minns	1 ACE Dorset Lead Teacher	Joanna.dennis-minns@five-rivers.org	07519376251
James Hall	Head of Education	James.Hall@five-rivers.org	07935066031

(Jo for ref as Lead Teacher, awaiting Dorset and Wiltshire to agree DSL certificate from Somerset. Louise is DSL Lead currently)

LA Safeguarding contact details:

WILTSHIRE: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Telephone: Mon – Thurs 8.45-5pm / Fri 8.45 – 4pm 0300 4560108
Out of office: 0300 4560100

If a child is in immediate danger or left alone, you should contact the police or call an ambulance immediately on 999.

Email: mash@wiltshire.gov.uk (less urgent enquiries)

DORSET: PAN

The Teams are based at:

B,C,P (Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole) – Children’s First Response Hub

Email – childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Telephone: Mon – Thurs: 8.30 – 5.15 pm **01202 123334**

Out of Hours Service: 01202 738256

Dorset – Children’s Advice & Duty Service (ChAD)

Email:

Telephone: Mon – Fri 8-10pm, Sat – Sun 9-10pm: **01305 228558**

Out of Office: **01305 228558**

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Actions where there are concerns about a child



