

Guidance

Dealing With a Concern or Taking a Disclosure

Dealing with a Concern

A 'Concern' is when you notice something about a child that gives you cause to be concerned about their welfare. Your concern may be regarding (but not limited to) their mood, their behaviour, their appearance, their general demeanour

If you are concerned about a child for *any* reason ***be curious***.

Talk to the child, ask questions give them time to respond, explain and talk.

If it would not put the child at risk, speak to their parent/carer about your concern.

Do not wait to do this. Speak to the child and the parent/carer about your concern before reporting it on My Concern.

Concern Prompt sheet

Be Curious, ask questions.

Think – Does what the parent/carer and child say correlate?

Think – Are you happy with the explanation?

Think – Did your conversations with the Child and Parent give you more or less cause for concern?

- Talk to the child and parent/carer about what you have noticed that is concerning you
- Do ask the child and parent/carer if there is anything they feel they need some help or support with?
- Ask questions to establish facts rather than lead.

For example

'How did you/they get that bruise?' rather than 'Did someone hurt you/them?'

'Where were you/they when this happened?' rather than 'Did this happen at home/school?'

'How are you/they feeling?' rather than 'Are you/they feeling sad?'

'I've noticed is everything ok?' rather than 'You don't seem ok, are you?'

If after talking to the child and carer you are no longer concerned, you do NOT need to make a record on 'MyConcern'.

If you are no longer concerned talk to the tutor/support worker you are working with about why you were concerned, what action you have taken and why you are no longer concerned. Repeated concerns over a period of time would need to be recorded on MyConcern and monitored by staff

If after talking to the child and carer you still have concerns you need to record these on MyConcern.

Taking a Disclosure

A 'Disclosure' is when a child or person tells you something that has happened to them, or that they have seen or information they have been told that puts them or someone else at risk of harm, this can be current or historic. This could be part of a general conversation, part of workshop discussion or an intentional disclosure.

Actions to take

*The person receiving information concerning disclosure **should:***

- React calmly
- Tell them that they are not to blame, that were right to tell or talk about it
- Take what they say seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language says.
- Questions should only be used to clarify if necessary and should be kept to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Reassure them but do not make promises of confidentiality. **You have a duty to report any concerns that a child may be in danger of harm.**
- Make a full written record of what has been said, heard, and or/seen as soon as possible. Do not do this in front of them.

Actions to avoid

*The person receiving the disclosure **should not:***

- Panic
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information than is offered
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Ask leading questions
- Make negative comments about an alleged abuser
- Approach an alleged abuser
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Attempt to investigate

Making a written record

Information passed to children's services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed written record either on paper or directly on to MyConcern at the time of the disclosure. Once the record is on MyConcern you must put any hand written record into the confidential waste. Information should include the following:

- First and second name spelt correctly
- The class or programme they are on
- Their address
- Full names of people involved and their relationship
- The nature of the allegation or concern
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- The persons account, if it can be given, of what has happened and/or how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Full names of any witnesses to the incidents.
- Any times, dates or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

You should record the facts of your concern, what action you took, who you spoke to and what was said.

You should not record your personal opinion, emotive language or additional irrelevant/historic information. Everything recorded is subject to the 'Freedom of Information Act' and GDPR.

Reporting should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information.