



8 - Child Protection

It is now widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to protect children from abuse. All children have a right to be protected from all forms of abuse and discrimination and to be treated equally regardless of gender, racial origin, culture, religious belief, language, disability or sexual orientation.

Recognising abuse is not easy, even for individuals who have experience of working with child abuse. Most children will receive cuts, grazes and bruises from time to time and their behaviour may give reason for concern. There may well be reasons for these factors other than abuse, but any concern should be immediately discussed with a senior colleague to assess the situation.

What to do if you are concerned.

Remember that it is not your responsibility to decide if child abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to take action, however small your concern.

Inform a senior colleague who will take responsibility for seeking any additional advice and for contacting the LADO - Local Authority Designated Officer (number available in the office) or the Police who are trained to deal with such situations and have the necessary legal power to protect the child.

What to do if there are allegations of abuse against a member of staff.

Refer the matter to a senior colleague so that the appropriate child protection procedure can be followed. The senior member of staff must inform the LADO or the Police.

If your concern is about a senior colleague then seek advice from another senior member of staff, who should ensure that the child protection procedures are implemented and the LADO or the Police are informed.

It is important to understand that a member of staff reporting a case of child abuse, particularly by a colleague, may undergo a very high degree of stress, including feelings of guilt for having reported the matter. It is therefore very important to ensure appropriate counselling and support is available for staffing such a situation.

Protecting Yourself.

- Avoid being alone in a room with the door closed and just one child.
- Try to avoid being left alone with a child at any time.
- Be aware of how you touch people – this may be construed the wrong way. Play fighting is inappropriate.
- If you need to transport a child to hospital or the doctors, take an adult with the casualty.
- Think about the language you use with children – is it appropriate, too suggestive, etc.
- Children may find it easier to relate to you than a parent or teacher, be careful you do not allow them to become emotionally involved.
- If you feel you have been in a situation that could lead to an accusation from a child, inform a senior colleague immediately.

Contact Numbers: South Tyneside Council Contact and Referral Team 0191 424 5010 or 0191 456 2093 (out of hours)

Training.

All Thurston staff have undertaken safeguarding training.