Child protection and mandatory reporting procedure

SOP TEMPLATE

Check this template against your local regulations and your own policies before you use it.

SOP no.		Version		Effective date	
Owner		Approver		Review date	

Purpose

To protect children in our care by making sure every educator recognises the signs of harm, responds safely to a disclosure, records concerns accurately, and reports them to the right authority without delay.

Scope

Every educator, staff member, student, volunteer and contractor at the service. It covers concerns about harm at home or anywhere else, and allegations about anyone working at the service.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
All educators and staff	Know the signs of harm, act on any concern, record it and report it. Where the law makes them a mandatory reporter, they make the report themselves.
Nominated supervisor or service director	Supports the educator, makes sure reports are made and recorded, notifies the regulator where required, and manages allegations about staff.
Approved provider or owner	Makes sure staff are trained, the procedure is current, and reports about staff are handled independently.

Definitions

Child abuse and neglect: Physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, or exposure to family violence that harms a child or puts them at risk.

Mandatory reporter: A person whom the law requires to report a belief that a child is being harmed. Who is a mandatory reporter, and what must be reported, differs by country and state.

Disclosure: When a child, or someone else, tells you that a child has been or is being harmed.

What you need

- The contact details for your local child protection authority, the police and your regulator
- The service's child protection concern form

Procedure

1. **Know the signs**

   Watch for unexplained injuries, changes in behaviour, fear of going home or of a person, poor hygiene or hunger, and sexual knowledge or behaviour unusual for the child's age.

2. **Make the child safe**

   If a child is in immediate danger, call the police or emergency services first, then tell the nominated supervisor.

   > **Caution:** Don't release a child to anyone you believe is a danger to them. Call the police if they try to collect the child.

3. **Respond calmly to a disclosure**

   Listen, stay calm, and tell the child they did the right thing by telling you. Don't ask leading questions, promise to keep it secret, or investigate yourself.

   - Use the child's own words when you repeat back
   - Tell the child what you'll do next in words they understand

4. **Record the facts the same day**

   Write what you saw and heard, with the date and time, the child's exact words, and any injuries, on the concern form. Record facts, not opinions, and sign and date it.

5. **Report it**

   Report to the child protection authority as your local law requires, and tell the nominated supervisor. If you're a mandatory reporter, you must make the report yourself, even if a manager disagrees.

   > **Caution:** The law sets who must report, what must be reported and how quickly. Check the rules for your country and state and put them in this step.

6. **Notify the regulator where required**

   The nominated supervisor checks whether the incident or allegation must also be notified to the childcare regulator, and does so within the required time.

7. **Handle allegations about staff**

   If the concern is about someone working at the service, the approved provider manages it, keeps the child away from that person, and reports it as the law requires, without warning the person first.

8. **Keep it confidential**

   Share information only with the people who need it to protect the child, and store records securely, separate from the child's general file.

9. **Support the child and the staff**

   Keep the child's routine as normal as you can, and offer the educator who reported support, such as debriefing or an employee assistance program.

Records

- The child protection concern form, signed and dated.
- A record of each report, who it was made to, when and the reference number.
- Regulator notifications, kept for the period your rules require.

Related documents

- Incident, injury, trauma and illness procedure
- Arrival and departure procedure
- Code of conduct
- Speak-up and whistleblowing procedure

Revision history

Version	Date	What changed	Approved by