

Safeguarding Children

My responsibility as a childminder is to ensure the safety and welfare of all the children in my care in line with the procedures laid out by my local Safeguarding Children's Board. I keep a copy of the relevant local procedures and they are available on request. I will check biannually to ensure I have the most up to date version.

I have received training on Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) and am aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse, physical, emotional and sexual, and those of neglect.

If I have reason to believe that any child in my care is being abused in any way I will contact the social services for advice. Under these circumstances I may not be able to keep information relating to your child confidential. I may be compelled to share it with Ofsted, Social Services and the Police following a formal request from them to do so.

Parents must notify me of any concerns they have about their child and any accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child, which will be recorded. I work together with parents to make sure the care of their child is consistent – please refer to my Working with Parents policy.

If I notice:

- significant changes in children's behaviour

- unexpected bruising or marks or signs of possible abuse

- any comments made which give me cause for concern

- deterioration in general wellbeing which causes concern

- signs of neglect

I will implement the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures without delay to minimise any risk to the child. I will call the local social services' duty desk immediately, if it is known that a child is at risk of harm. I will follow it up with a letter within 48 hours. I will keep a factual

record of the concern and will ask the parents for an explanation, providing it would not put the child at risk.

The standards for registered childminders in England require me to let Ofsted know of any concerns that I have reported without delay.

If a child tells me that they or another child is being abused, I will:

- show that I have heard what they are saying, and that I take their allegations seriously
- encourage the child to talk, but I will not prompt them or ask them leading questions. I will not interrupt when a child is recalling significant events and will not make a child repeat their account
- explain what actions I must take, in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child
- write down what I have been told using exact words where possible
- make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present at the discussion
- then report my concerns immediately to the duty social worker who has the experience and responsibility to make an assessment of the situation.

My mobile phone is an essential part of my emergency toolkit to be taken on all trips so I can always call for assistance or contact parents; it also allows me to capture those unplanned moments when I don't have a camera to hand. My camera is an effective tool for providing evidence of children's experiences/achievements/enjoyment; it allows me to share this information with the parents in a meaningful way.

I request permission from parents to take photos and make observations, please see my childminding observation policy. I have registered with the Information Commissioners Office

(ICO) to become a data controller. My phone is password protected. My phone and camera are kept in a secure location which only I can access. All photos on my mobile phone and camera are deleted at the earliest opportunity. By default photos are deleted when a child leaves unless I have received permission to use their photos in my promotional material.

As a childminder working alone I am more vulnerable to allegations of abuse being made against my family or me. I will take precautions to protect myself from this happening by:

- Ensuring all household members over 16 are Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), cleared.

- Ensuring all visitors to the house sign the visitors book and do not have unsupervised access to the children under any circumstances.

- Ensuring, where possible, that no trade persons are in the house during minded hours, unless it is to repair an emergency service or for health and safety reasons.

- Document every accident and incident that occurs whilst your child is in my care, informing you and requesting that you sign my records.

- Noting any marks on your child when they arrive and asking you to inform me of any accidents that have occurred whilst outside my care. These will be recorded in the accident and incident book under pre-existing injuries and I will ask you to sign the record.

- Ensuring the children are supervised at all times.

- Keeping accurate records on each child and writing a daily diary.

However sometimes allegations are made and this unfortunate situation cannot be avoided. I will then follow the procedure detailed below, in order to gain support and professional advice:

- I will contact the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY), Insurance Company, PACEY Legal Advice Line and Ofsted.

· I will write a detailed record of all related incidents, including what was said and by whom, with times and dates.

· I will ask any witnesses (if there were any), to also write a statement detailing the incident they witnessed and giving their contact details in case it needs to be followed up by the authorities.

If you have any concerns regarding this procedure please do discuss them with me.