



REPORTING ABUSE

If you are in a situation where a child discloses abuse to you there are several steps you can take.

- Listen carefully to the child - avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the child to 'shut down', retract or stop talking
- Let them know they have done the right thing - reassurance can make a big impact to the child who may have been keeping the abuse secret
- Tell them it is not their fault – abuse is never the child's fault and they need to know this
- Say you will take them seriously – a child could keep abuse secret in fear they will not be believed. They have told you because they want help and trust you will be the person who will listen to and support them
- Do not talk to the alleged abuser – confronting the alleged abuser about what the child has told you could make the situation a lot worse for the child
- Explain what you will do next – if age appropriate, explain to the child you will need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help
- Do not delay reporting the abuse – the sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better. Report as soon as possible so details are fresh in mind and action can be taken quickly.

DISCLOSURE

If a child tells you about abuse, your role is to respond sensitively and pass the information on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If someone discloses abuse to you, here are some basic principles that you should adhere to:

DO

- Listen, do not question
- Never push for information
- Accept what the child is saying
- Keep calm and look at them directly
- Be sympathetic ('I am sorry that this has happened to you')
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell you and that you take them seriously
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened
- Let them know what you will need to tell someone else
- Do not promise confidentiality - you should never promise that you will not tell anyone, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child

- Let them know what you are going to do next
- Make as precise notes as you can, writing down exactly what was said. If possible, use the child's own words. Record dates and times - when you were told about them and when you made the notes. Give the notes to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

DO NOT

- Stop the child who is freely recalling significant events, for example, do not say 'hold on, we will come back to that later', as they may not tell you again
- Ask leading questions
- Promise to keep secrets – you cannot keep this information confidential
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental, for example, 'why didn't you run away?'
- Doubt the child's disclosure
- Make comments such as 'You should have told someone before'
- Ask 'Why? How? When? Where? Who?'

AT THE END OF THE DISCLOSURE

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you but do not promise confidentiality
- Let them know what you are going to do next
- Immediately seek help, in the first place from the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Write down accurately what the child has told you. Records should be detailed and precise
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

- James Blencowe (Course & Admissions Coordinator): 01865 240637; james.blencowe@oxss.co.uk

IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ABOVE:

- Nick Strugnell (Managing Director): 01865 240637; nick@oxss.co.uk
- Emma Thompsett (Admissions Coordinator): 01865 240637; emma@oxss.co.uk
- Marshall Martin (Residential Manager): 01865 240637 (available on residential courses only)

If you believe that the child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the police on 999. Should it be later proved that your actions were mistaken or unnecessary, they are still justifiable if they were based on your genuine concerns for the child.

FLOW CHART: SAFEGUARDING CHILD REFERRAL

