



Responding to Safeguarding Concerns and Child Protection Disclosures

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that every member of staff, volunteer, student and visitor understands their responsibility to recognise, respond to and report safeguarding concerns promptly, consistently and in accordance with current legislation and local safeguarding procedures.

At Clare House Nursery, we are committed to maintaining a child-centred safeguarding culture where every concern is taken seriously, no matter how small it may appear. We recognise that early identification, professional curiosity, accurate recording and timely information sharing are essential in protecting children from harm and ensuring they receive the right help at the right time.

If You Are Concerned About a Child's Welfare

At Clare House Nursery, we recognise that safeguarding concerns do not always present with obvious signs of abuse or neglect. There may be occasions when a member of staff feels that something is not quite right but has no clear evidence that a child is at risk. A child's behaviour may change, their play or interactions may become concerning, they may appear withdrawn or anxious, make comments that raise concern, or display physical signs that are inconclusive.

Staff are expected to remain professionally curious and apply the principles of The Curious Practitioner, looking beyond what is immediately visible, identifying patterns of concern, considering the child's lived experience and avoiding assumptions about family circumstances.

We recognise that changes in a child's behaviour or presentation may be linked to a range of life experiences, such as bereavement, family separation, illness, housing difficulties or other significant events. Staff should create opportunities for children to communicate naturally through play, daily interactions and trusted relationships. It is entirely appropriate to ask simple, open questions such as:

- "Are you okay today?"
- "Would you like to tell me about what has happened?"
- "Is there anything I can do to help you?"

Staff must never ignore concerns; however small they may appear.

Recording Early Concerns

All safeguarding concerns, observations, conversations and injuries must be recorded promptly using the nursery's Record of Concern Form, in accordance with the nursery's safeguarding recording procedures.

The Record of Concern Form is used to record:

- concerns about a child's welfare or wellbeing
- conversations with children, using the child's own words wherever possible
- conversations with parents or carers that relate to a child's welfare or safeguarding
- discussions with staff regarding safeguarding concerns

- observations of injuries, marks or changes in a child's presentation
- any actions taken, advice sought and decisions made.

Records must be:

- factual, accurate and objective
- dated and timed
- signed by the person completing the record
- completed as soon as reasonably practicable whilst the information remains fresh
- written using the child's own words wherever possible, avoiding opinion, assumptions or interpretation.

The completed Record of Concern Form must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or Deputy DSL in their absence, without delay. The DSL will review the information, assess any immediate risks and determine the most appropriate course of action.

Where concerns do not meet the threshold for statutory child protection intervention, the DSL will consider whether the child and family would benefit from Early Help, additional support within the nursery or partnership working with other agencies, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and local safeguarding partnership procedures.

All completed Record of Concern Forms will be stored securely and confidentially as part of the child's safeguarding record, in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and the nursery's information-sharing procedures.

Low-Level Concerns

Clare House Nursery encourages all staff to report low-level concerns at the earliest opportunity. Whilst one isolated concern may not indicate abuse, repeated observations or patterns over time may identify that a child requires additional support or protection.

Every concern matters. Staff should never delay reporting concerns in the hope that they will resolve themselves.

As part of our open and transparent safeguarding culture, every nursery room has a Low-Level Concerns and Reflection Log. Staff are encouraged to record any incident or interaction that, on reflection, could reasonably be perceived as having caused discomfort, distress or potential harm to a child, even where no injury has occurred and there are no safeguarding concerns.

Examples include:

- Accidentally knocking into a child during routine activities.
- Guiding a child into line and the child commenting, "Ouch, that hurt."
- A child becoming upset following an interaction with a member of staff.
- Any incident that could later be misunderstood or questioned.

Recording these incidents is not an admission of wrongdoing. Instead, it demonstrates honesty, transparency and professional accountability. These records help safeguard both children and staff by providing an accurate account of events, encouraging reflective practice, identifying patterns or learning opportunities and supporting a positive safeguarding culture.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Nursery Manager will review these records regularly and provide guidance, support or additional training where appropriate.

Speaking Up

Safeguarding discussions regularly take place during:

- Team meetings
- Supervisions
- Safeguarding updates
- Reflective practice sessions
- Staff training.

These opportunities promote continuous professional development and reflective practice. However, staff must never wait for a meeting or supervision before reporting a safeguarding concern.

A Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is available to provide advice and support whenever concerns arise.

If a Child Makes a Disclosure

Children rarely disclose abuse easily. It often takes considerable courage for a child to tell someone they are being harmed. They may:

- feel frightened or ashamed
- have been threatened by the person causing harm
- worry they will not be believed
- fear getting someone into trouble
- believe the abuse is their fault
- not understand that what is happening to them is abusive.

Young children may communicate concerns through their play, behaviour, drawings, interactions or conversations rather than through direct verbal disclosure.

Every disclosure must be taken seriously.

If a child begins to disclose information, staff must never promise to keep secrets. Children should be reassured that information will only be shared with people who need to know in order to help keep them safe. The timing of this explanation should be based on professional judgement so that the child feels listened to whilst understanding that safeguarding concerns cannot remain confidential.

During a Disclosure Staff Will:

- remain calm and attentive
- allow the child to speak freely
- listen carefully without interruption
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking
- acknowledge how difficult it must have been to tell someone
- reassure the child that the abuse is not their fault

- use open prompts such as "Tell me...", "Explain..." and "Describe..." where clarification is required
- explain, at an appropriate point, that the information must be shared with people who can help keep them safe
- tell the child what will happen next in an age-appropriate way
- report verbally to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- complete a Record of Concern as soon as possible using the child's own words wherever possible
- seek support if they are affected by the disclosure.

Staff Must Not:

- ask leading or investigative questions
- ask "why" questions
- press the child for additional information
- express shock or disbelief
- criticise or blame anyone
- promise confidentiality
- promise to keep secrets
- confront any alleged perpetrator
- discuss the disclosure with anyone who does not need to know
- automatically offer physical comfort, as this may not be appropriate or welcomed by the child.

Notifying Parents

Clare House Nursery believes that working openly with parents and carers is usually in the child's best interests.

Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will discuss concerns with parents before making referrals.

However, parents **will not** be informed where doing so may:

- place the child or another person at increased risk of harm
- prejudice a police investigation
- compromise enquiries by Children's Social Care
- result in evidence being lost or destroyed.

In these circumstances, advice will first be sought from Children's Social Care or the appropriate safeguarding agency.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information is highly sensitive and will be managed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

All staff understand that safeguarding concerns must only be shared with those who need the information to protect the child. Fear about sharing information must never stand in the way of safeguarding a child.

Information sharing decisions will always be:

- necessary
- proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure.

The reasons for sharing, or deciding not to share, information will always be recorded.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely, kept separately from children's learning and development records and will only be accessible to authorised staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will normally seek parental consent before sharing information where appropriate. However, consent is not required where seeking consent would place a child at increased risk of harm or prejudice safeguarding enquiries.

Reporting Directly to Safeguarding Agencies

Although staff are expected to follow the nursery's safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, there may be exceptional circumstances where immediate action is required to protect a child.

Staff may contact Children's Social Care, the Police or other safeguarding agencies directly where:

- a child is believed to be at immediate risk of significant harm
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy are unavailable
- delaying action would place the child at greater risk
- they believe appropriate safeguarding action has not been taken following a reported concern.

Staff will always be supported where they make a safeguarding referral in good faith in the best interests of a child.

All staff receive safeguarding training in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), local safeguarding partnership procedures and relevant government guidance. Staff are expected to remain familiar with the Effective Support for Children and Families framework and other current safeguarding publications to support professional decision-making, early identification of need and appropriate referrals.

