

A Safe Place for Children

GUIDELINES FROM THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS TO PROMOTE CHILD SAFETY IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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1 INTRODUCTION

Libraries for children and young people are dynamic and exciting services: early years librarians are working across the community supporting early literacy skills, study support programmes are enabling children to realise their potential and proactive social inclusion projects are working with vulnerable young people in challenging settings. Underpinning all this, libraries retain their primary role as community centres for reading. To allow these services to flourish it is essential that the library is above all a safe place for children. It must be a place where young people feel secure, confident to enjoy the resources around them and where they know that they will receive suitable help.

These Guidelines have been produced to support library staff in creating this secure environment. They have been written specifically for:

- Library staff who need a clearer understanding of their duty of care for young people who use libraries.
- Young people's services managers in public libraries who are looking for a framework in which to develop guidelines to support child safety in their libraries.

A child safety policy must be one of the foundations of a well-managed public library service. Rather than a reaction to particular difficulties or threats, it should seek to proactively create an environment in which young people feel comfortable and in which their self-confidence as learners and citizens can grow.

As responsible agents working with children, it is important that libraries are seen to create safe community spaces and take the issue of child safety seriously. It is also important that libraries supply children with the information they need to ensure their security. For example, details of Childline and the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline should be displayed.

These Guidelines must be read in conjunction with the policies and procedures of the local authority.

2 LEGAL BACKGROUND

Public library staff do not assume the responsibility of a parent but do have a responsibility to provide for the care, control and safety of children visiting libraries. The ultimate responsibility for the child rests with the parent. This should be made clear to parents whose children attend activities such as homework clubs and story times in the library

Library staff in charge of events should take such care of those children as a reasonable parent would take. This will be a personal responsibility of the staff member and of that person's employer.

Even if staff do not take on the responsibility of looking after children, their employers owe a duty of care under the Occupier's Liability Act 1957. This duty is to take such care as is in all the circumstances reasonable to ensure that visitors will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purpose for which they are permitted to be there. The standard of care expected in relation to children is higher than in relation to adults because staff must expect children to be less careful than adults. In the unlikely event that there is on the

premises anything which is both an allurements and danger to children, the 1957 Act requires that reasonable care must be taken to protect them from that danger.

Whether or not staff take responsibility for children in libraries, they should be guided at all times by the essential principle in the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount.

All library staff should be issued with a copy of the government guidance on child protection "what to do if you are worried a child is being abused - Summary". The guide sets out clearly the roles and responsibilities of individuals and agencies.

Library staff should seek clarification (and copies) of their authority's own policies concerning child protection and health and safety, and should ensure they comply with those policies. Staff should identify where these policies are kept so that they can be located quickly in an emergency. If these Guidelines conflict with those policies, the matter should be raised with the employer but the employer's instructions will prevail.

3 UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN IN LIBRARIES

The way in which library staff deal with unaccompanied children in the library must be based both on an awareness of the responsibility of the parent or the *loco parentis* carer, and the library's duty of care to all children on library premises.

Children are the legal responsibility of their parents and carers, who should always accompany their young children (under the age of 8) whilst at the library. There will be situations when young children visit the library unaccompanied. Whilst not wishing to discourage children from visiting the library, staff need to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the child and to inform parents/carers of their responsibilities.

3.1 A good practice response when a child is found alone in the library

- Try to avoid being left alone with a child. Try to ensure colleagues are present when you are dealing with unsupervised children.
- Establish whether the child is allowed by the parent or carer to come and go alone. If you are satisfied that this is so, then allow the child to leave. If you gather this information only from the child then you will need to use your judgement to ascertain whether the child is competent to leave alone.

Relevant factors may be:

- whether the child exhibits signs of nervousness
- whether the child appears to clearly understand your questions
- whether the child seems physically capable
- whether the child appears to know clearly and readily where he or she lives
- how far the journey is
- whether you know of any particular hazards on the journey

If you are in doubt, encourage the child to remain in the library until you have been able to contact a parent or carer or the social services team or the police. Children under 8 should not normally be allowed to leave alone unless you know that in the particular case the parent/carer allows it.

- Ask the child if s/he is expecting to be collected by an adult. Even if the child is expecting to be collected soon, do not wait until closing time before taking the next step.
- Try to contact the parent/carer; see if the child can give you an address or telephone number; check registration details to see if the child or a parent/carer is a library member.
- If attempts to contact the parent/carer fail, see if the child can give you the details of a relative or close family friend to contact. However, do not release a child into the care of someone (other than police or social services) unless you are sure that they are the parent or carer or the parent/carer has given permission.
- If all attempts fail, contact your local area Social Services Duty Team. If you cannot contact the Social Services Duty Team, then contact the local police station.

3.2 Unsupervised children at closing time

- Staff should be prepared to check on the child's situation with the support of another member of staff – are they waiting for a parent or carer to collect them, or are they expected to go home alone?
- Staff should telephone the child's home from the library to clarify the situation if necessary.
- Staff should wait for the parent/carer to collect the child and then explain the library's policy to them.
- If a parent or carer cannot be contacted then the relevant social services team should be contacted.
- If the team cannot be contacted then contact should be made with the police to collect the child and to make sure the child has not been reported as missing.
- Under no circumstances should a child be escorted home by a member of the library staff.

The incident should be reported to the relevant senior manager at the earliest opportunity.

In order to emphasise the need for parents to supervise children within the library it is useful to display a simple sign reminding them of their responsibility:

**Parents and carers are strongly advised not to leave children
unsupervised in the library.**

Children under 8 must never be left unsupervised in the library

4 ORGANISED ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN ON LIBRARY PREMISES

Childminding and day care for children under the age of 8 are regulated by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) under Part XA of the Children Act 1989 (as amended by the care standards Act 2000) and are required to work to the “National standards for under 8’s day care and childminding”. Day care, which by definition is provided on non-domestic premises, should be registered and inspected by Ofsted, if it operates for more than two hours a day and 6 or more days per year. Ofsted should be notified if premises are used for the first time in that year. It is important to remember that under the Act it is actually an offence to provide day care that should be Ofsted-registered. If you are in doubt check with Ofsted before you start planning an event.

Although it is likely that much of the provision in libraries will not need to be registered, the national standards will nevertheless be valuable in informing your planning.

Although these standards only apply to under 8’s the principles are worth following for children of all ages.

There are 14 national standards dealing with all aspects of care, from the suitability of adults to health and safety requirements. If the library is registered with Ofsted, compliance with the standards will be an important registration requirement. The following are extracted from the standards:

- staffing ratio
 - ◆ 1:3 for children under 2 years
 - ◆ 1:4 for 2 year olds
 - ◆ 1:8 for 3-5 year olds

(other standards require 1:15 for 7-16 year olds)

- group size should not exceed 26
- at least 2 adults must be on duty
- there must be adequate space (particular areas per child are specified in the standards)
- there must be access to a telephone on the premises
- equipment must conform to safety standards
- risk assessments must be carried out
- there must be a first aid box complying with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 and a member of staff trained in first aid for infants and young children
- regular and appropriate food and drinks are provided
- special needs are catered for

Cilip would advise that no child under 5 years of age should be left unaccompanied for events.

Remember!

These are the Ofsted guidelines for registered child care of two hours or more. They are only offered as providing sensible guidelines and not hard and fast rules for library events.

Epipens

Epipens are prescribed to people with an extreme allergy (such as nuts or bee/wasp stings). In schools only the school nurse and designated first aiders are allowed to administer Epipens. All libraries should have a designated first aider but this does not necessarily cover administration of Epipens.

At the time of writing, there were no guidelines available concerning the administration of Epipens. We would advise that library staff should not take the responsibility of administering Epipens. Whilst we would not want to exclude an individual child from an activity, it should remain the parent's responsibility to stay with the child. Authorities may want to take local advice on this issue. If we can find reliable guidelines we will issue them at a later date.

4.1 Planning the activity

The following considerations should be made:

- Suitable numbers of adults to supervise the event. If a class or group is visiting, one member of staff can supervise the activity if the accompanying adults remain with the group. When using outside speakers/entertainers, one member of staff should remain with the group at all times. Any guest speakers / entertainers / volunteers should be supervised at all times, ie they should **never** be in the position of having unsupervised access to children.
- General health and safety considerations must be borne in mind.
- Obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act must also be taken into consideration. In providing services you must not discriminate against any person on grounds of disability and must take reasonable steps to enable disabled children to use the service.
- Ensure you are aware of the library's first aid arrangements.
- Determine a maximum attendance figure, based on staff, space and the type of activity. If there is any doubt about the ability to control numbers, ticket the activity.
- Ensure you are complying strictly with the requirements of the library's fire certificate and any recommendations or requirements of the fire authority and the premises' insurers.

4.2 Publicity material

Publicity should specify the age of the children at which the event is aimed. It should clearly state starting and finishing times. It should also contain the following - or similar - statement:

“Parents or carers collecting children from a library activity must instruct children to stay in the library until collected.”

4.3 During the event

If children are to be left by their parent/carers at the library **register all children attending the event**. Have a written record of name, address, telephone number, name of parent collecting, any known medical conditions and how such medical conditions are to be dealt with, particularly in an emergency.

Consider carefully how long these records need to be kept. For example, might they be needed in case of any dispute? The Data Protection Act requires (among other things) that personal data can only be kept for as long as it is necessary to keep it for the purposes for which it has been obtained. Does the library’s data protection notification allow such data to be processed?

During the event all staff should be identifiable (eg by wearing a staff badge).

If a child wishes to leave an event, every effort should be made to persuade them to stay until the return of the parent/carer.

If you feel you need to physically stop a child from leaving, you are allowed to use reasonable force in order to “prevent accident or injury” or “in self defence”. This should be done in the presence of another member of staff.

If relying on the fact that the child may itself suffer accident or injury if not restrained, you should have reasonable grounds for believing there to be a real risk. Bear in mind also that if you have taken responsibility for the child you must exercise such care as a reasonable parent would. Children should only be released into the care of their recognised parent/carer, unless the library has been informed that the child is allowed to leave alone, or they arrived alone. Children should only be allowed to leave in the care of another child if that child is of the age and competence to be able to accept responsibility for their own or another’s safety and you have permission from the parent/carer, or the child arrived in the care of that other child.

Events should be scheduled to end at least half an hour before the library closes to allow time for parents who are late in collecting their child.

5 EVACUATION OF THE LIBRARY

A poster clearly displaying the location of the library's assembly point should be displayed in the library.

All library staff must be familiar with procedures to ensure the safety of children in the event that library premises need to be evacuated. When the alarm is sounded a nominated member of library staff should be responsible for checking that no unaccompanied children are left in the library or related spaces (open meeting rooms, toilets etc).

In the event of an evacuation any unaccompanied children should be taken by staff to the assembly point. Children who are expected to be met by a parent/carer should be kept with library staff until the parent/carer claims them. Children who are not expected to be met and who are allowed to leave the library unaccompanied may be allowed to make their own way home.

In the event of an evacuation during an organised library activity for children, staff must lead children to the assembly point and take the register of children attending the event. The register must be checked to ensure that all children are out of the building. If a child is unaccounted for this should be reported immediately to the emergency services.

Ensure you are aware of any requirements imposed by the fire authority.

6 ADULTS IN LIBRARY AREAS DESIGNATED FOR CHILDREN'S USE

Children's library areas need to be clearly signed as designated for the use of children and their parents and carers.

It is important to remember that adults will use a children's library to obtain information, borrow or return material and to supervise their children. However staff must be watchful of adults acting in ways which may threaten a child's safety and be responsive to a child's concerns. This is a very sensitive area and staff should be cautious, but the child's welfare must come first.

An adult in a children's library area, but not seeming to use it, should be offered seating in the adult library or help in finding the information they require.

Concerns about an adult's behaviour should be immediately shared with the senior staff member on duty

If necessary, staff should remain in the children's area with the adult, or the adult should be asked to leave the area which is designated for children's use.

An adult may use the Internet to approach a child in the library. It is the responsibility of the library to ensure an acceptable use policy for the Internet is in place and publicised, which advises the child against divulging personal information. It is essential that education and supervision of children's Internet use has their security as its primary theme. Many library services have blocks which do not allow children to access certain categories of sites. These precautions are not necessarily effective and inhibit legitimate search strategies.

There may be specific concerns relating to children and adults using people's network terminals in communal areas. Care should be taken when siting terminals to avoid the

possibility of an adult striking up inappropriate relationships/conversations with children. Staff should be watchful and intervene if they have concerns. If behaviour continues to be a concern then, in accordance with local procedure, steps should be taken to warn the adult that if the behaviour persists they will be requested to leave or potentially barred.

However there are advantages to shared use and we would not want to prevent readers helping each other.

Authorities should consider including this in their Internet appropriate use policy.

It is also recommended that steps be taken to ensure that children's work, potentially containing personal details, cannot be saved onto an area of the computer where other users may be able to access it.

7 USE OF STAFF TOILETS

Where there is no public toilet, it is reasonable to allow children to use the staff facilities.

Direct the child to the toilet, but do not enter the cubicle with the child.

8 OUTREACH VISITS

When a member of library staff visits another organisation, eg a school, supervision of the children remains the responsibility of the organisation being visited.

At least one member of staff from that organisation should be present at all times.

Make sure you take ID with you and be prepared to comply with any security procedures the organisation has, eg signing in and out and wearing a visitor's badge.

Libraries should provide enough staff to undertake the sessions they have arranged to do.

Any concerns a member of staff has about child protection issues whilst on an outreach visit should be reported to the designated child protection person in that setting, who will undertake the necessary response. A note should be made and passed onto the senior management team.

9 SURVEYING AND CONSULTATION

As libraries undertake more consultation work, staff need to be aware of sensitivities regarding talking to children. The guidelines in the Children's Plus folder provide useful advice.

If you are surveying children under 14 in focus groups or more detailed consultation, you do need permission from parents or the adults acting in *loco parentis*. Make sure that you provide adequate information and notice to ensure parents are kept informed.

If your survey gives rise to statistical data only there will be no data protection concerns. However, if you are collecting information from which a child could be identified, you will need the consent of its parent/carer.

If you are visiting an outside group ensure that they have adequate notice and information so that they can inform the parents and children.

You do not need permission from parents to ask children general questions where you will not use or publish the information in such a way that individual children could be identified. If surveying in libraries make sure that notices are displayed that explain why you are approaching children. A publicity campaign before the survey is strongly recommended in the Plus manual.

Do not interview children alone in a separate room. Ensure that all one-to-one interviews with children are in public places.

Identification should be worn by all staff while they are conducting a survey.

Remember, if you want to survey or consult in a public place you may need to get permission, eg from Shopping Centre Management Agency.

See also guidelines on child protection issues.

10 AVOIDING SITUATIONS WHERE LIBRARY STAFF MAY BE IN A VULNERABLE POSITION

- Never accompany a child into a toilet.
- Avoid initiating physical contact with children.
- Never allow children to sit on your knee during storytime.
- In a difficult situation involving a child try and ensure another member of staff is present.
- Do not lead a child by the hand out of the library in search of a parent. Keep them safe until parent returns or call the police if you have cause to believe that the child has been abandoned/forgotten.
- If a child is obviously distressed do try and comfort them.
- Do not make arrangements to contact children outside the library.
- Do not do things of a personal nature for a child that the child could do for him or herself.

11 DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

The library should have a written policy which defines unacceptable behaviour (including racist and sexist language), to ensure that it is dealt with consistently. The policy should identify the staff who can deal with such behaviour.

It is important to deal with such situations calmly and quietly and to avoid putting yourself or others in danger.

Most authorities will have an anti-bullying policy adopted by schools. Libraries should apply the same principles. If you witness a child being bullied or a child complains of being bullied in your library, this is not acceptable behaviour and you have a duty to do whatever you can to stop it. In the first instance, tell the bully that their behaviour is not acceptable. If necessary, ask them to leave. Libraries should be places where children can feel safe.

12 THE WIDER CONTEXT: SUPPORTING CHILD SAFETY IN THE LIBRARY

Issues of child safety within the public library need to be addressed within the broader context of authority-wide strategies to ensure a locally co-ordinated and coherent approach to child safety.

Area Child Protection Committees (ACPC) provide the focus for this work. They exist to bring together the main agencies working in partnership with children (education, social services etc), families and communities to provide an effective system which safeguards and promotes the welfare of children in need of protection. In some places libraries are members of their local ACPC. It is essential that the local ACPC sees and approves local library child safety policies, so that they reflect the authority-wide approach.

All authorities will have their own Child Protection procedures, copies of which should be available for both public and staff in libraries. Inviting a representative from the Child Protection Team in social services to talk to library staff can create useful partnerships. It is important that staff maintain good relationships with social services and the police as this ensures a common approach to creating safe environments and supporting children at risk.

When library services are delivered through partnership projects it is essential that the library's child safety policy is in line with that of other partners. For example, if study support is being delivered in partnership with the local youth service a common approach to child safety will have to be agreed as part of the partnership agreement.

Local community contacts need to be shared with all library staff who work with children. Staff will need current police, social services and community contacts to support their work.

Child safety is a society-wide responsibility. It is important for library staff to be aware that, as part of the community working with children, they share in this responsibility. This awareness should give them confidence in working with young people.

Training should be provided regularly so that staff are aware of changes in procedures. Libraries can usually access this training via the authority's Child Protection Teams.

Photographing children in the library

Care should be taken to seek consent when taking photographs of children in the library. The main reasons are to protect children's identity and to prevent images of children being manipulated on the Internet. There are a few guidelines which should be followed:

- Never identify a child in a photograph by name in any circumstance, including publicity, posters or website, eg do not say "Julie from Crawley enjoying storytime".
- Never use a photograph of an individual child or children without seeking the consent of the parent(s).
- Generally it is acceptable to use large group shots where it is impossible to identify an individual child; these should be captioned very generally, eg "storytime".

Appendix 3 provides a proforma that can be used in libraries and raises some additional issues to consider.

APPENDIX 1: CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

The Criminal Records Bureau has been established to improve access to information on criminal records held by the police. This service enables criminal conviction checks to be undertaken for candidates selected to work with vulnerable client groups, including children. Part V of the Police Act 1997 makes provision for three different levels of criminal record checks. Once a check is complete one of three Disclosures will be issued: Basic, Standard and Enhanced. The type of check will depend on the nature of the position applied for.

Basic: revealing unspent convictions – at the time of writing this level of check is not available.

Standard: revealing spent and unspent convictions and any cautions given by the police. If the person is applying to work with children it will also show if the person is banned from working with children by virtue of his/her inclusion on the lists maintained by the Department of Health and the DfES.

These are primarily for posts that involve working with children or vulnerable adults. Standard Disclosures may also be issued for people entering certain professions, such as members of the legal and accountancy professions.

The Standard Disclosure contains details of all convictions held on the PNC including current and spent convictions as well as details of any cautions, reprimands or final warnings.

The Disclosure also includes information held by the DH of those considered unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults.

Enhanced: as for standard but with some additional police checking.

There are currently a wide variety of practices in local authorities relating to the criminal record checks of library staff. These are associated with the different advice given by police and social services to libraries.

These are for posts which involve a far greater degree of contact with children or vulnerable adults.

In general the type of work will involve regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of such people. Examples include a teacher or Scout or Guide leader.

Enhanced Disclosures are also issued for certain statutory purposes such as gaming and lottery licences.

An Enhanced Disclosure includes a check on local police records. Where local police records contain additional information which might be relevant to the post for which the applicant is being considered, the Chief Officer of police may release information for inclusion in an Enhanced Disclosure. Exceptionally, and in a very small number of circumstances (typically to protect the integrity of current police investigations), additional information may be sent under separate cover to the counter-signatory and should not be revealed to the applicant.

Guiding Principles

Standard disclosures are appropriate for all those with regular contact with children. Enhanced disclosures are appropriate for all those with regular unsupervised contact, ie those posts that involve regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of persons under aged 18 or vulnerable adults.

Regular contact includes face-to-face contact and virtual (ICT mediated, telephone etc) contact.

Regular contact may be defined as contact that may take place on more than one occasion.

Therefore library authorities should consider:

- Standard disclosures as appropriate for people with regular contact with children, which includes all new staff in Libraries.
- Enhanced disclosures as appropriate for those with regular unsupervised access to children, which includes specialist posts, ie Children's and Schools Services Managers, Children's Librarians, Schools Librarians, etc.

Each library authority is advised to determine its policy after considering the following points:

- Criminal record checking should be considered for staff working with vulnerable adults as well as for staff working with children and young people. Therefore a policy needs to be considered and supported by the whole library service.
- It is important that there is consistency in the practice of criminal record checks across the authority. Take advice from human resources staff, social services, the ACPC and the local police force.
- The success of partnership work requires an awareness of partners' procedures, and a consistency of approach wherever possible. Make sure that key partners (the youth service, the LEA and the SLS) are involved in the creation of your policy.

The procedure

A Disclosure Application Form must be filled in by the individual and submitted by the authority with original copies of a range of ID, which must be photocopied and authorised by an appropriate officer. Each authority will then have its own designated Officer, usually in human resources, who will be the counter-signatory and will send the form to the CRB.

The CRB will return the Disclosure Certificate to the counter-signatory with a copy to the applicant.

When a criminal record is revealed

Where there is a perceived risk of future misconduct, based on information in the Disclosure, this should be discussed with the individual.

If the report relates to a candidate for a post, and it is decided not to appoint, where appropriate the candidate should be given written reasons for the decision. An appointment should not be made before the disclosure has been received.

The fact that a person has a criminal record does not automatically render him or her unsuitable for work with children or other vulnerable groups. Research has shown that one adult male in three has a criminal record (excluding motoring offences) by the time he is thirty. Furthermore, NSPCC records suggest that only one in ten people who pose a threat to children actually have a past conviction.

However, it is not only sexual offences which may render a person unsuitable. A person's suitability should be looked at as a whole in the light of all the information available.

In deciding the relevance of convictions and/or other matters revealed in a Disclosure, a number of points should be considered:

a. What is the nature of the offence?

In general, convictions of a sexual nature and violent or drug offences will be particularly strong contra-indications for work with children or other vulnerable groups.

b. What is the nature of the appointment?

Often the nature of the appointment will help to assess the relevance of the conviction. For example, serious sexual, violent, drug or drink offences would give rise to particular concern where the position was one of providing care. Driving or drink offences would be relevant in situations involving transport of children or other vulnerable groups.

c. When did the offence occur?

Offences which took place in the past may often have less relevance than recent offences. However, convictions for serious violent or sexual offences or serious offences involving substance abuse are more likely to give cause for continuing concern than, say, an isolated case of dishonesty committed when the person was young. The chance for rehabilitation must be weighed against the need to protect children or other vulnerable groups.

d. Frequency of offence

A series of offences over a period of time is more likely to give cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction.

APPENDIX 2: CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

Although library staff are rarely directly involved in child protection issues, it is important that we are aware of our duties both as responsible members of society and as employees of a local authority.

All authorities will have their own child protection procedures, copies of which should be available for both public and staff in libraries. Child protection should be covered in induction training for all members of staff. Every Child Matters promotes communication across departments to achieve integrated services and it is valuable to invite someone from the Child Protection Team in social services to talk to staff on a regular basis.

The 1989 Children Act section 47 states that the local authority has a duty to protect and investigate if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm. As employees of the local authority and as responsible adults all library staff have a duty to report any suspicion of significant harm.

Referrals to social services can be anonymous and can be made by a member of the public or staff. It is not necessary to have proof but you do need to have serious concern. In cases of suspected ill treatment, severe neglect or abuse, the child's welfare is paramount and you will not be contravening the Data Protection Act if you disclose names and addresses to social services or the police. It will help social services investigate the case if you can supply context and evidence and your reasons for suspicion.

If you have serious concerns about a child it is helpful to record the following:

- the basis for the concerns you have, ie what triggered your initial concern
- what actions you have taken
- any physical signs that you have seen
- what the child has said
- the observations of any other member of staff

Make sure you keep your manager informed at all stages.

Inform either your social services help desk/duty social worker or the police. There may be a local preference for which service to contact and it is as well to check what is the right procedure for your authority. Make sure that libraries know where procedures are kept and that the number for their Duty Social Worker is readily available.

The social worker will check files and contact the police and school to find out if anything is known about the family. **From this information they will decide whether they need to take the matter further.** It could be that no action is required or that the family can be offered support. Child protection procedures will only be followed if all the information they collate suggests it is appropriate.

Where a child protection investigation is indicated, the Child Protection Social Worker will arrange a meeting with the police officer from the Child Protection Unit to decide what action the investigation requires. You should be contacted and informed about what is happening.

Children are most likely to disclose information about abuse to people outside the family and often to a trusted adult. If this should happen try and stay calm:

- listen
- respect what the child is telling you
- don't interrupt, prompt or ask questions unless it is to clarify what the child said (without leading them)
- reassure the child if they are upset
- you must tell the child that you cannot keep the information secret, but that you will only pass it on to people who need to know and that you will support them. Children usually disclose because they want the abuse to stop.
- write down everything: date, time, what has been said, any injuries you have seen
- often children will not want to make eye contact with you but will carry on looking at a book or colouring as they talk

As with witnessed instances, inform your line manager and social services.

What to do if you have suspicions about another member of staff

The most important consideration is the welfare of the child. Refer to your local guidelines. As a general rule, in the first instance report your concern to your manager. If it is your manager you are concerned about, go directly to the most senior person with responsibility for children and young people within your library authority. Managers should treat any suspicion as urgent and the person concerned should be removed from duties that involve direct contact with children. The staff member should be informed of your concerns. Social services advises that, unless there has been a complaint from a child, the situation can be dealt with as an internal matter.

Remember that the guiding principle of child protection is that the community has a responsibility for the well-being of all children and that all professionals should work together to provide that protection.

APPENDIX 3 USING IMAGES OF CHILDREN

Sample Consent form for use by Libraries

To Name of the child's parent or guardian: _____

Name of the child: _____

School: _____

Occasionally, we may take photographs, or make video or web cam recordings, of children in libraries. We may use these images on the County Council website and in other printed publications that we produce. Photographs, video or web cam recordings may be taken of the children at the library e.g. a Summer Reading Challenge activity for use in the local press. These images may be used in publication to the general public.

To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, we need your permission before we can photograph or make any recordings of your child. Please sign and date the form where shown.

If you have concerns regarding the use of your child's image, please contact (needs to be a senior member of staff)

The policy on using images of children (in accordance with the conditions of use on page 2) is:

1. We may use your child's image on the County Council website.
2. We may use your child's photograph on other printed publications that we produce for promotional purposes.
3. Your child's photograph may be used in the local newspapers, in television reports on media websites.

I have read and understood the conditions of use on the back of this form.

Parent's or guardian's signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (in block capitals): _____

Please return the completed form to the library as soon as possible.

Conditions of use

1. We will not use the personal details or names (which means first name and surname) of any child or adult in a photograph on our website or in any of our printed publications.
2. We will not include personal e-mail or postal addresses, or telephone or fax numbers, on our website or in printed publications.
3. If we use photographs of individual children, we will not use the name of that child in the accompanying text or photo caption.
4. If we name a child in the text, we will not use a photograph of that child to accompany the article.
5. We may use group or class photographs or footage with very general labels, such as “a storytime”.
6. We will only use images of children who are suitably dressed, to reduce the risk of such images being used inappropriately.
7. If images are taken by local press/media or parents/guests, the Library Service will not have control of these images.