



Puddleducks'
Nursery & Preschools

Child Protection Policy

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Section One: Rationale

All children at Puddleducks' are treated with dignity and respect and have the right to have their needs met in a safe environment.

Puddleducks' teachers operate within the registered teacher criteria which sets a high standard for professionals in the early childhood field.

The purpose of this policy is to provide Puddleducks' staff guidelines by which to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of abuse and neglect, and to understand their role in keeping children safe.

TE WHAARIKI: Children experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm.

This policy has been written in accordance with the following legislation:

- Education Act 1989
- Children, young Persons and Their Families Act, 1989
- Crimes Act, 1961
- Domestic Violence Act, 1995
- Health Act, 1956
- Health and Disability Sector Standards Regulations, 2001
- Privacy Act, 1993
- Health Information Privacy Code, 1994
- Vulnerable Children's Act, 2004
- Care of Children Act, 2004
- Employment Relations Act, 2000
- Human Rights Act

This policy will be reviewed annually, and updated in the light of operational experience and in line with changes to legislation and associated policies.

Section Two: Scope

This policy covers all staff of Puddleducks' Nursery and Preschools who have direct or indirect contact with children. This includes those staff, paid or voluntary, employed directly by Puddleducks', as well as those professionals contracted or invited to provide services to children in the care of Puddleducks'. This includes teaching and non-teaching staff.

Section Three: Definitions

1. For the purpose of this policy 'child' means a boy or girl under the age of 14 years, 'young person' means a boy

of girl of or over age 14 years but under 17 years; but does not include any person who has been married or in a civil union (Children, Young Person and Their families Act 1989, section 2)

2. For the purpose of this policy 'staff' means people working at Puddleducks and includes employees, contractors, consultants, students, associates and volunteers whether working on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis.
3. The children, young persons and their Families Act, 1989, defines child abuse as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person".

Section Four: Principles

This child protection policy confirms the commitment of Puddleducks' to the protection of children and proceeds to:

- Outline the standards and principles by which all staff will abide
- Define child abuse
- Outline the action to be taken by staff where any form of abuse or ill-treatment is known or suspected
- Establish what action is required when allegations are made against staff.

Puddleducks will ensure that:

- Staff are carefully selected with the principles of this policy in mind
- Staff are appropriately trained in the area of child protection
- Staff are aware of this child protection policy and accompanying procedures and guidelines.

All services provided by Puddleducks' for the safety and wellbeing of children adhere to the principles of partnership, protection and participation; and the rights and responsibilities accorded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Section Five: Responsibilities

Any member of staff, paid or voluntary, may directly witness child abuse or have allegations, made by a child or adult relayed to them. There may also be disclosures of abuse that have occurred prior to attending Puddleducks'. Sustained abuse and neglect of children, wherever it occurs, can have major long term effects on all aspects of children's health, development and well-being and their ability to sustain stable and meaningful relationships in the future. It is the intention of Puddleducks' to ensure that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety of children at all times. This is achieved through consistent and agreed protocols regarding child protection, as well as the regular undertaking of awareness raising training.

Each staff member must:

- Be aware of, and alert to, potential risk factors and indicators of abuse
- Record a factual account of any concerns they have, or that are brought to their attention.
- Appropriately seek advice and support from their designated Person for child Protection who will then support in contacting external agencies if appropriate
- Work in co-operation with the parents and caregivers, unless this compromises the safety of the child.

Puddleducks' will have an appointed Designated Person for Child Protection. This function will be held by a senior member of staff who has participated in specific Child Protection training.

Section Six: Child Protection Procedures

All staff will respond to concerns of child abuse by following the identified procedures, consulting appropriately and collaborating with external agencies.

The procedures below will help staff with:

- The identification of abuse
- Handling disclosures, whether verbal or behavioral, from a child
- Reporting procedures

If the designated person for Child Protection is unavailable then staff can consult with the General manager over any concerns they may have. At any time, staff may seek advice from Oranga tamariki on 0508 FAMILY – 0508 326459 regarding any child protection concerns.

Detailed information regarding signs and indicators of abuse is included in the appendix and can also be sourced from “How Can I tell? Recognising Child Abuse” publication by Child Matters which is available on each site in the staff library.

Handling Disclosures from a child

If a child makes a verbal disclosure to a member of staff it is important that staff take what the child says seriously. This applies irrespective of the setting, or the member of staff’s own opinion on what the child is saying.

Further information regarding handling a disclosure is included in appendix three

Under no circumstances should a member of staff attempt to conduct an investigation or deal with concerns regarding child abuse alone. Any incidents, concerns or suspicions must be reported following the procedures set out below.

Reporting procedures

All concerns of potential, suspected or alleged abuse must be brought to the attention of the Designated Person for Child Protection. If the designated person for child protection is not available then consultation should occur with the General Manager of Puddleducks’. A joint decision will be made as to whether to seek further advice or to notify Oranga Tamariki.

All decisions taken, including if the concern does not require notifying Oranga Tamariki, must be recorded in writing and kept securely in a child protection file with the reasons clearly identified and explained.

Effective documentation, including referrals and notifications, must be on a confidential ‘incident form’ and include the following:

- *Staff are to listen carefully to what the child is saying and are not to interview them or ask too many questions, ask the very basics ie. Who/When?*
- *Once the basics have been ascertained no further questions are to be asked. Record of facts, what was said or seen and by whom, include time and date and everyone who was present*

Although the parent or caregiver of the child will usually be informed of concerns, there may be times when those with parental responsibility may not be initially informed by Puddleducks’ and the decision as to when this will happen will be determined by Oranga Tamariki or the police. This may happen when:

- *The parent of caregiver is the alleged perpetrator*

- It may be possible that the child may be intimidated into silence
- There is a strong likelihood that evidence will be destroyed
- The child does not want their parent or caregiver involved and they are of an age when they are competent to make that decision (this will generally not be the case of children enrolled at Puddleducks' however it may come into play if older siblings are the subject of the alleged abuse we are dealing with)

Sharing information and confidentiality

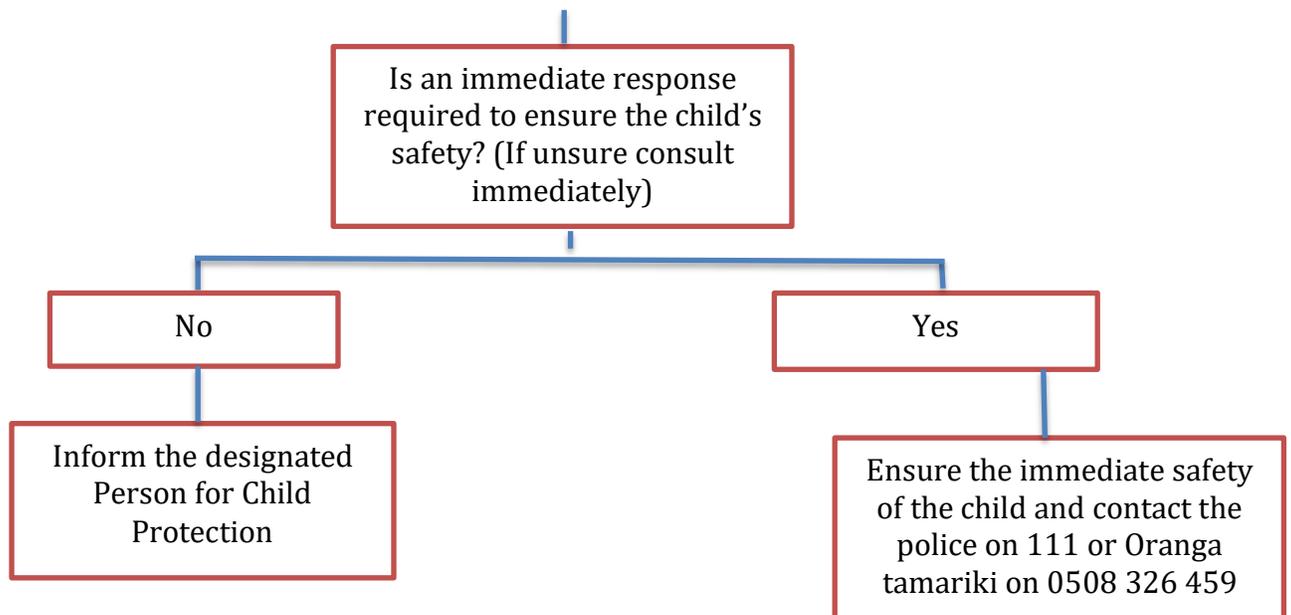
The safety of a child is paramount. At times, a child is unable to speak for or protect themselves. Therefore Puddleducks' has a greater responsibility to know information with external agencies to **Abuse suspected or disclosed** when and how to share appropriate protect the safety and wellbeing of the children.

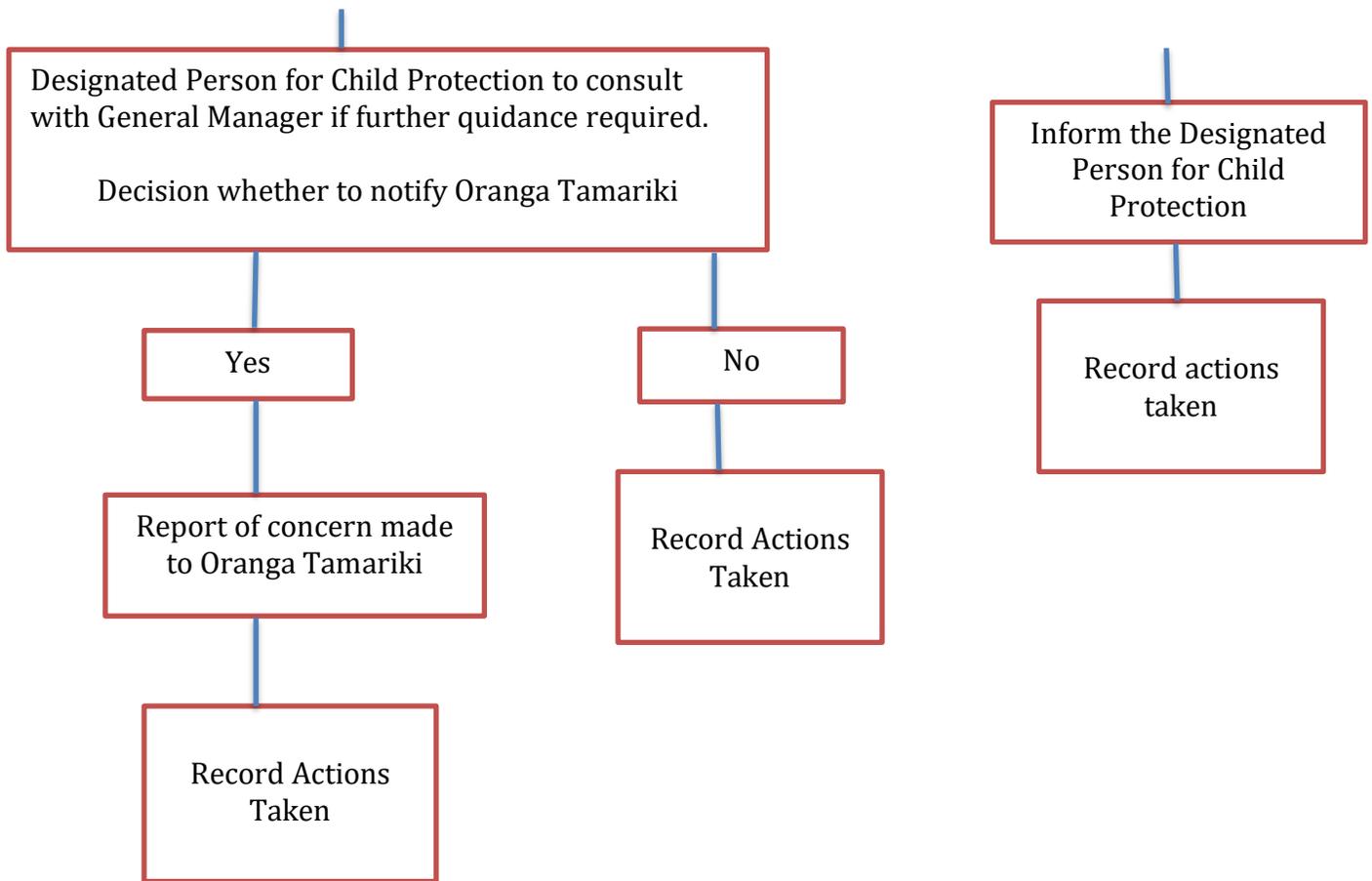
Giving information to protect children is not a breach of confidentiality. Principle 11 of the privacy act, 1993, states "disclosure of the information is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat"

Should Puddleducks' be contacted with a request for information on a child the following procedure will be followed:

- Confirm identity and credentials of the person requesting the information (no information will be given over the phone during the initial call – we will always ask the caller for their contact information and get back to them)
- Identify specific information requested and purpose
- Notify the Centre Leader (they may wish to discuss with the designated child protection person before going further)
- Where appropriate the child's family/whanau will be informed of any information requested, by whom and permission will be sought to share this. **If this is a child protection issue then parental permission is not required.**
- A return call/contact will be made (usually by the centre leader) with the requesting agency representative and the requested information will be shared.

All steps will be documented in this process and records placed in the child protection file.





Section Seven: Safe Recruitment of staff

All appointments (permanent, fixed term, students, casual or volunteer) will be conditional on a complete safety check which will include but not be limited to a police check.

Section Eight: Training of staff

All staff at Puddleducks’ will receive child protection training at the level appropriate to their role. The designated Person for Child Protection will undertake more intensive training and these persons will be accessible to staff for advice and support.

All new staff will be given a copy of this policy as part of their induction

Section Nine: Safe working Practices

Puddleducks’ Teachers operate within the Registered Teachers Criteria which sets a high standard for professionals in the Early Childhood field.

If Puddleducks becomes concerned and aware of a staff members inability to continue a high standard of caring and educating for the children they may be offered suitable time and resources to help address the issues before returning to work. See Employee assistance package.

The indoor and outdoor areas at Puddleducks’ are designed with the maximum amount of ‘open’ spaces available.

Windows into sleep rooms and bathrooms ensure safety and supervision of children at all times.

Staff areas are strictly 'adult only areas'

At Puddleducks' we have an 'open door' policy and parents are welcome to visit at any time during the day

A minimum of two staff are rostered on at any one Puddleducks' site at all times so that no staff are ever left in the situation of being the only staff member on site when children are present

If an Puddleducks; employee has perpetuated alleged abuse, the authorities will be informed immediately and the employee will be suspended while the matter is investigated.

Management Responsibilities

Puddleducks' will offer support to all those involved in any abuse allegations including all staff who may be involved in making a notification to ensure their own well-being through the process.

Resources on preventing and dealing with cases of suspected abuse are made available in the staff and parent libraries

The Aspiring Services Ltd Child Protection policy will be part of the regular review cycle of all policies and not reviewed any less than three yearly.

Formulated: May 2000, by Pip Davidson^[1]_{SEP}

Reviewed: April 2002, September 2003, May 2005, September 2008, April 2009^[1]_{SEP}

Reviewed: June 2017

Appendix One:

Definitions of Child abuse (as taken form 'How can I tell? Recognising Child abuse' a Child Matters publication as well as Child Matters Child Protection studies Programme Studies Folder).

What is Child abuse?

"...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually, ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person".
section 2, Children, Young Persons and their Families Amendment Act, 1994

Types of Child abuse:

Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Abuse.

Emotional abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing and hearing of ill-treatment of others.

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse also includes the fabrication or inducing of illness.

Physical abuse may be the result of a single episode or of a series of episodes.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs. Neglect is a lack of action, emotion or basic needs. Neglect can also be a one-off event such as abandonment.

Neglect is usually the result of a parent or caregiver omitting to do something, rather than a deliberate act to hurt a child.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example, rape, kissing, touching for sexual purposes, masturbation) as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours.

Appendix Two

Signs and Symptoms/Indicators of abuse

Indicators can be physical or behavioural – please be mindful that indicators do not necessarily prove that a child has been harmed. They are clues that alert us that abuse may have occurred and that a child may require help or protection.

Sometimes, indicators can result from life events which do not involve abuse. For example – divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling, etc.

Emotional Abuse

Physical indicators:

- Bed-wetting or soiling that has no medical cause
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g.: headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)

- Non-organic failure to thrive (This may also look like neglect and occurs when a child falls behind in weight, height and development with no medical explanation).
- Pale, Emaciated
- Prolonged vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Malnutrition
- Dressed differently from other children in the family

Behavioural indicators:

- Suffers from severe developmental lags (speech, motor, sensory) without an obvious physical cause
- Depression, anxiety, withdrawal or aggression
- Self-destructive behaviour. This include self-harm, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, may threaten suicide.
- Overly compliant
- Extreme attention seeking behaviour
- Running away from home, avoiding attending school
- Anti-social behaviours (may not cope well in social settings)
- Lack of self-esteem
- Obsessive behaviours
- Appears generally as a 'sad' child

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- Bruises, cuts, welts and abrasions (suspicious locations include face, lips, gums, mouth, eyes, torso, back, buttocks, back of legs, external genitalia)
- Burns- small circular burns, immersion burns, rope burn etc
- Fractures and dislocations – skull, facial bones, spinal fractures etc
- Multiple fractures at various stages of healing
- Fractures in very young children

Behavioural Indicators:

- Inconsistent or vague explanations regarding injuries
- Wary of adults- or a particular individual
- Vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
- May cringe or flinch when touched unexpectedly
- May be extremely compliant and eager to please
- Dresses inappropriately for the weather (to hide bruising or injuries)
- May indicate general sadness
- May regress eg: pant/bed wetting
- Could have a vision or hearing delay
- Is violent to other children or animals
- When at play may imitate violent or aggressive behaviours

Neglect

Physical Indicators:

- Dressed inappropriately for the season or the weather
- Often extremely dirty and unwashed
- Severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders
- Inadequately supervised or left unattended frequently or for long periods

- May be left in the care of an inappropriate adult.
- Does not receive adequate dental or medical care
- Malnourished – this can be both underweight and overweight
- Lacks adequate shelter
- Severe, non-organic failure to thrive (falls behind in weight, height or development with no medical explanations – this condition may also be a result of emotional abuse)

Behavioural indicators:

- Severe developmental lags (speech, motor, sensory) without a obvious physical cause. Children may exhibit global delays
- Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to parents
- Demonstrates indiscriminate attachment to other adults
- Poor school attendance and performance
- Demanding of affection and attention
- Engages in risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse
- May steal food
- Poor social skills
- No understanding of basic hygiene

Sexual Abuse

Physical indicators:

- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area
- Torn, stained or bloodied underclothing
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal areas
- Blood in urine or stools
- Pain experienced in urination or elimination
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy
- Discomfort in sitting or fidgeting as unable to sit comfortably

Behavioural Indicators:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play or language
- Sexually explicit drawings or descriptions
- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- Refuses to go home or to a specific home for no apparent reason
- Fear of a certain person
- Regression to an earlier stage of play or development
- Comments such as 'I've got a secret' or 'I don't like Uncle'

Appendix Three

Disclosure

It is important that you as the adult remain calm and confident when a child tells you what has been happening for him or her. Every child is different in how, when and where they will tell an adult about abusive experiences so it will most likely happen when you are least expecting it. Your facial expressions and your tone of voice are just as important as what you say to the child.

Basic principles when dealing with Disclosure

Respond to the person- believe what they tell you and what you see

Record- Immediately all initial statements, observations and concerns to avoid misinterpretations or confusion at a later date.

Consult-Do not make decisions alone. Consult with the designated person for child protection (or general manager in their absence). If there is no short-term risk, take time to consult thoroughly in order to make a well-informed decision.

Ensure the safety of the child – Contact Oranga Tamariki or the police if you think there is an immediate risk of the child being abused again.

Report – Decide how to act on your concerns. Don't leave it to someone else and hope it won't happen again. If you believe you have told the person responsible for acting and they do not act, take further action yourself.

Get Support- seek support for yourself

DO

- Listen, allow the child to tell as much as they want without interrupting (remember listening is not questioning)
- **Respond reassuringly** to the child (see below)
- If you do ask a question avoid leading questions, ask only open questions that seek clarification so that you can decide what action you need to take
- Most importantly "BELIEVE WHAT THEY SAY"
- Document what the child said and the responses that you made and any **clarifying questions** (see below) asked (word for word and remember to put date, time, place and who else may have been present)

DON'T

- Question in a way that introduces words, phrases, people's names or concepts
- Indicate that you disbelieve the child
- Try to correct, change, challenge or influence what they say
- Respond by saying "You should have told me sooner" or "Why did you let him/her do that"

Reassuring responses:

These responses convey belief in what the child has said and let the child know that you have heard them and will do something about what they have told you. Some examples are:

- Thank you for telling me
- You have done the right thing by telling me
- I know what to do to help you
- It's not ok that that happened to you
- I am taking what you are telling me seriously (more appropriate for teenagers)
- This has happened to other children too
- It's not your fault
- I'm glad that you have told me
- I am sorry that this has happened to you

Clarifying Questions

At times, what children say is unclear as to whether they are speaking about an abusive experience or a non-abusive one. In these situations, asking an open or clarifying question in a neutral manner is the appropriate response. Open questions begin with **who, what, when** and **where** and rather than why ask **how come**. Other words you could use are **Tell, explain** and **describe**.

Below are some examples of when it might be ok to ask clarifying questions and a range of responses to demonstrate possible answers:

Statement by child: "My bum is sore"

Clarifying question by adult: "How come your bum is sore?"

Child response scenario 1: "Because we were at the beach and I got sand in my togs and the sand made my bum sore"

Child response scenario 2: "Because my dad kicked my bum with his steel boots and it made a bruise on my bum"

Child response Scenario 3: "Grandads been putting his fingers up there"

Statement by child: "My neighbour does bad things to me"

Clarifying question by adult: "Tell me about it?"

Child response scenario 1: "She swears at me when I walk past her house on the way home from preschool"

Child response scenario 2: "When she babysits me she makes me watch people having sex on her computer and then makes me do bad things to her"

Child response scenario 3: "When she babysits me she shows me how to write swear words"

Statement by child: "My tummy gets sore when Daddy tells me off"

Clarifying response by adult: "How come your tummy gets sore when Daddy tells you off?"

Child response scenario 1: "Because I had a sore tummy from eating too many plums and Dad told me off in a growly voice"

Clarifying response scenario 2: "It gives me butterflies in my tummy that makes me feel sore and I don't like Dad telling me off"

Clarifying response scenario 3: "Dad tells me off by punching me in the tummy with his foot"

Seek support for yourself: Having a child make a disclosure of any type of abuse will have an emotional impact on you and it is important that you discuss not just what happened but how you are feeling about the experience with someone you trust and will respect what you tell them.

Newly Formulated August 2017(following complete review of old policy) by Chrissie Cole. To be reviewed again end of 2018.