



Safeguarding Children Policy	
Dudley Lodge	
Date Policy Effective From:	December 2016
Date Reviewed:	January 2024
Policy Checked/Reviewed by:	Rachael White

Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures that ***all*** staff and Directors need to adhere to when there are concerns about potential child abuse. The policy also includes flow chart diagrams (appendices 1 & 2), which should be referred to when there is a suspicion of child abuse.

The policy should be implemented using the following guidelines when conducting work that involves children. This will protect the safety and well-being of children at Dudley Lodge and staff working at the Centre.

Definitions

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

- For this policy
 - The term 'child' will be used to describe all children and young people under the age of 18 years' old
 - 'Child' also includes any parent who is under the age of 18

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and residents at Dudley Lodge, Coventry. Bonner House, Birmingham has its own Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.

Statement of Intent & the need to report concerns

Dudley Lodge acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is fully committed to developing robust policies and procedures that minimise the risk of children experiencing abuse within the Centre.

Dudley Lodge aims to ensure an encouraging atmosphere is maintained which enables staff, Director-Trustees, volunteers, parents and children (who are old enough) to report any concerns they have. The Centre will continually demonstrate a commitment to provide an environment free from abuse. This policy will be maintained and reviewed on at least an annual basis.

Dudley Lodge will comply with inter-agency procedures, namely the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership. These arrangements reflect the fundamental legislative changes to the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) which are covered within Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and requires all organisations that work with children to cooperate to keep children safe from harm.

Core Principles

The Policy is based upon the following fundamental principles:

- The welfare of children is paramount;
- Children's needs are the central consideration in all decision making;
- All young people, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, parental status, disability, religion or belief, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, or socio/economic background have a right to be protected from abuse;
- There is a duty of care to safeguard children and work in partnership with relevant agencies and in line with inter-agency adult and children protection procedures.
- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

Legislation and Government guidance

The following are the key pieces of legislation and government guidance that are most relevant to the policy and procedures:

- Children Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Care Act 2014
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Education Act 2002
- Digital Economy Act 2017
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Children and Adoption Act 2006
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Education Act 2011

Reporting Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for safeguarding rests with Mrs Carly Davis, Chief Executive of Dudley Lodge. She will ensure Dudley Lodge's procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children comply with all UK legislation and in line with inter-agency protection procedures.

Dudley Lodge has appointed a Lead Officer for safeguarding who will be responsible for managing the response to safeguarding concerns and implementing Dudley Lodges' policies, this is the Operations Manager, Mrs Rachael White. There is an appointed Deputy Lead Office for safeguarding at Dudley Lodge, this is the Registered Manager Ms. Paula Niven.

There is a requirement that all employees are to report any concerns about the welfare or safety of any child accommodated at Dudley Lodge to one of the following, without delay:

- A member of the Executive Team,
- Registered Manager or Service Manager,
- Deputy Centre Manager,
- Team/Case Manager

In addition, an employee may also report their concerns to:

- Director/Trustees,
- A police officer.
- An officer of Ofsted
- An officer of the Local Authority (Children's Social Care).
- An officer of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

All staff must be alert to the possibility of abuse by other children, visitors and members of staff, as well as the child's family, other people in the child's social network and strangers. On occasions where a member of staff is believed to be implicated, colleagues have a responsibility to report such circumstances immediately.

Some behaviour by children towards other children may come within the definition of abuse. In these circumstances, the Centre must refer both children to the Local Authority's Children's Social Care Team (Coventry Children's Services initial contact service, 02476 788 555 and/or mash@coventry.gov.uk) and to the relevant social work teams (the Placing Agencies) who will decide whether to undertake an investigation in respect of either or both children. For outside of normal office hours, the Centre should call 02476 832222 for the Emergency Duty Team.

When one child in the Centre abuses another child, whether physically, sexually or emotionally, it is not always possible or appropriate to remove the abuser (peer on peer abuse). It is however, rarely appropriate to remove the victim as a response to abuse. A member of the Executive Team; Centre Manager, Deputy Centre Manager or a Team/Case Manager will discuss these issues with the Local Authority's Children's Social Care Team and the Placing Agencies.

Where the parent wishes to make a complaint under the Centre's complaints procedure, this should not delay any form of investigation, or be used to replace the child protection procedure.

All aspects of practice, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding will constitute an ongoing element of formal/informal supervision.

Staff may become alert to the possibility of abuse through their own observations, through what the child says to them, or concerns expressed by others.

Equality

The organisation recognises the importance of ensuring that there are procedures in place to ensure **all** children are protected from abuse and poor practice. Dudley Lodge acknowledges that some children, including young people with disabilities, or children from an ethnic minority community, can be more vulnerable to abuse. Care will be taken to ensure additional safeguards are in place to take account of individual needs and recognise that there may be additional challenges that need to be addressed to help all young people raise concerns.

Review & Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, and in light of:

- Changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidance;
- Requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards and NSPCC
- Learning from serious case reviews
- Any safeguarding incident

The following procedure must be followed in all cases: -

Action to be taken when a parent is implicated in the allegation

If concern about possible child abuse arises from observation of the child's behaviour or from bruises, marks, or other physical signs, the staff member should consult immediately with a member of the Executive Team, Senior Management Team or with a Team Case Manager on duty/on call. In evaluating the level of concern, it is important to avoid excessive questioning of the child or parent. Additionally, staff need to ensure that the child is not left unsupervised with anybody who is potentially implicated in the suspected abuse.

If the concern arises from something the child has said, the staff member must listen carefully and avoid asking leading questions. At such times, confidentiality cannot be respected and promises to keep such information secret should not be made.

There is also a requirement to report to the police any evidence of children becoming involved in prostitution, or of unauthorised persons picking children up, contacting children in the Centre, or observed trying to contact children outside the Centre. Additionally, staff at the Centre will report any suspicions in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and/or Radicalisation, Extremism and should cross reference to the relevant policies.

Where there are allegations or suspicions of abuse, or other actual or likely significant harm to a child, staff members will ensure a prompt referral (in writing or with written confirmation of telephone referral) to the placing Children's Social Care Team or, out of hours, the local Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and to the allocated Social Worker/Team Manager/Duty Social Worker. The Local Authority will provide guidance to Dudley Lodge in respect of the actions that need to be taken.

Should a member of staff who has expressed a safeguarding concern feel that inappropriate or insufficient action has been taken, they should express this orally and in writing, to a member of the Executive Team, Senior Management Team and/or a Team Case Manager. Following this, if a person is still unhappy with the outcome/action taken they should contact the local Children's Social Care Team as outlined within Dudley Lodge's Whistleblowing Policy.

Action to be taken when a member of staff is implicated in the allegation

Where a member of staff is implicated in the allegation a member of the Executive Team and/or Senior Management Team will liaise immediately with the local Children's Social Care Team to coordinate the safeguarding and personnel aspects of the investigation. It is the responsibility of a member of the Executive Team to decide on the need for any investigation under the Centre's disciplinary procedures, and to consider the immediate protective needs of other children in the Centre, together with the need for staff support.

Where a member of staff, Director or a visitor to the Centre is implicated, it is the responsibility of a member of the Executive Team, Senior Management Team or a Team/Case Manager to contact the local Children's Social Care Team or, if out of hours, the Local EDT. The local Children's Social Care Team will advise on the need to carry out further investigations in respect of other children presently or previously in placement and, where necessary, will ensure coordination of such investigations. As such, a referral should be made to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) as the earliest opportunity, either via email to lado@coventry.gov.uk, using the online reporting form using the link: http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/206/coventry_local_safeguarding_children_board/2628/local_authority_designated_officer_lado or by contacting the persons responsible on **024 7697 5483** or completing the online reporting form by using the following link:

https://myaccount.coventry.gov.uk/service/Allegations_against_people_who_work_in_positions_of_trust_with_children_referral.

If the Team/Case Manager on duty is implicated in the abuse, the staff member must inform a member of the Executive Team immediately. If a member of the Executive Team is not available, the staff member must notify the local Children's Social Care Team or, if out of hours, the Local EDT.

If a member of the Executive Team is implicated in the abuse, the staff member will report the matter to another member of the Executive Team who must inform the local Children's Social Care Team immediately or, if out of hours, the Local EDT.

Should a member of staff who has expressed a child protection concern implicating another member of staff feel that inappropriate or insufficient action has been taken, they should contact the local Children's Social Care Team.

The Executive Team and/or Senior Management Team and Team/Case Managers will ensure that members of staff subject to allegations against them will have access to information and support while an investigation is pursued.

Recording

The member of staff receiving the information, or identifying the safeguarding concern, must make a detailed written recording of what they have observed, or been told, and the reasons for their concern and the action taken. This recording must be done as soon as practicably possible within the shift.

The recording will be placed on the family's file at the Centre, with the view of this being potentially shared with other professionals should this be deemed necessary, e.g., the Police, the placing Local Authority.

A written record must be kept by the Executive Team member, Senior Management Team member of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response.

The Local Children's Social Care Team

On receiving any Child Protection referral, the placing Children's Social Care Team or, if out of hours, the local EDT will:

- a) Discuss and consider the referral information.
- b) Consult other agencies and the placing Local Authority.
- c) Decide whether to proceed with an investigation.
- d) Decide in conjunction with Centre staff:

- The need for immediate child protection measures to be carried out within the Centre.
- What information/explanation will be given to the child?
- What information/explanation will be given to the parent/carer?
- The role of Centre staff during any investigation and what the care arrangements for the child will be.

If it is alleged or suspected that abuse has taken place within the Centre or if any member of staff or a resident is implicated as a possible abuser, the local Children's Social Care Team will consider whether to follow the procedures for investigating allegations of abuse in groups and establishments.

Where the abuse implicates someone in school or in any other organisation providing a service to children, the Executive Team member, or member of the Senior Management Team must inform the local Children's Social Care Team.

The Executive Team member and/or Senior Management Team member, the local Children's Social Care Team and the relevant Social Worker will give due consideration, in each case, to the measures which may be necessary to protect children at Dudley Lodge following an allegation of abuse or neglect.

Representation

The Executive Team will ensure, where necessary, that the Centre is represented in any strategy discussions, child protection conferences and subsequent reviews.

Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) Procedures Manual

In addition to the Centre's safeguarding policy, we need to adhere to the safeguarding procedures as stipulated by Coventry Local Authority. As per the guidance of the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership, the manual will be updated regularly online, so staff should avoid retaining printed versions, since hard copies are only valid for 72 hours.

Dudley Lodge does not retain a hard copy of the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership's Procedures Manual. However, details highlighting where the manual can be located and referred to is attached to this policy (Appendix 3). As part of the induction process all newly recruited staff members will be provided with the opportunity to read and understand these procedures. All Family Assessment Workers will receive training in Child Protection, and the use of the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-Agency Procedures.

Recruitment and Selection of Staff

The Executive Team, member of the Senior Management Team must comply with the framework of the Protection of Children Act 1999 to enhance the level of protection for children by identifying those people considered to be unsuitable to work with children.

In recruiting staff, Dudley Lodge will follow a systematic selection process designed to assess the applicant's suitability for the post and to work with children. The company's system for recruiting staff ensures the following takes place and is in line with the Safer Recruitment process:

- Interview by more than one person;
- Check of identity against an official document;
- Disclosure and Barring Service Checks
- Obtaining written references, including the most recent employer, with a reference request letter that specifically asks all referees to state any known reason why the person should not be employed to work with children;
- Direct verbal contact with each referee to verify the reference;
- Check on proof of relevant qualifications;
- Contact with each previous employer involving work with children or vulnerable adults, to check the reasons the employment ended; and
- A satisfactory explanation of any employment gaps.

Notification

The Executive Team member, or Senior Management Team member will provide prompt notification to Ofsted of the initiation and outcome of any safeguarding enquiries involving any child accommodated at Dudley Lodge. A notification of any child safeguarding enquiry should be made to Ofsted within 24 hours or ASAP if the incident occurs on a weekend or bank holiday.

Subsequently, the Executive Team will consider if a notification to the Charity Commission is also required.

Reporting to the Police

Staff will report to the police any event/evidence of children becoming involved in prostitution, or of unauthorised persons picking children up, contacting children in Dudley Lodge, or observed trying to contact children outside of the Centre.

Additionally, staff at the Centre will report any suspicions in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation and/or radicalisation and should cross reference to the relevant policies.

Therapeutic Work

Staff should be aware that the responsibility for any direct investigative or therapeutic work with the child lies with the Placing Agency's Social Worker. The Social Worker may ask a family assessment worker to assist, but this should be limited to practical tasks, with the consent of an Executive Team member or Senior Management Team member.

Residents

Residents residing at Dudley Lodge must be provided with the necessary information and opportunity to contact the local Children's Social Care Team, or Ofsted, regarding any concerns that may arise in relation to the welfare or safety of children residing at Dudley Lodge.

This information can be found in the Residents Guide which all families are provided with when they move into the Centre.

Corporal Punishment

Staff members must not use any form of corporal punishment at any time on any child or parent under the age of 18 who is accommodated at Dudley Lodge.

Each family's Placement Plan clearly states that physical punishments are not deemed to be a suitable response when guiding or setting boundaries for children.

Request for References

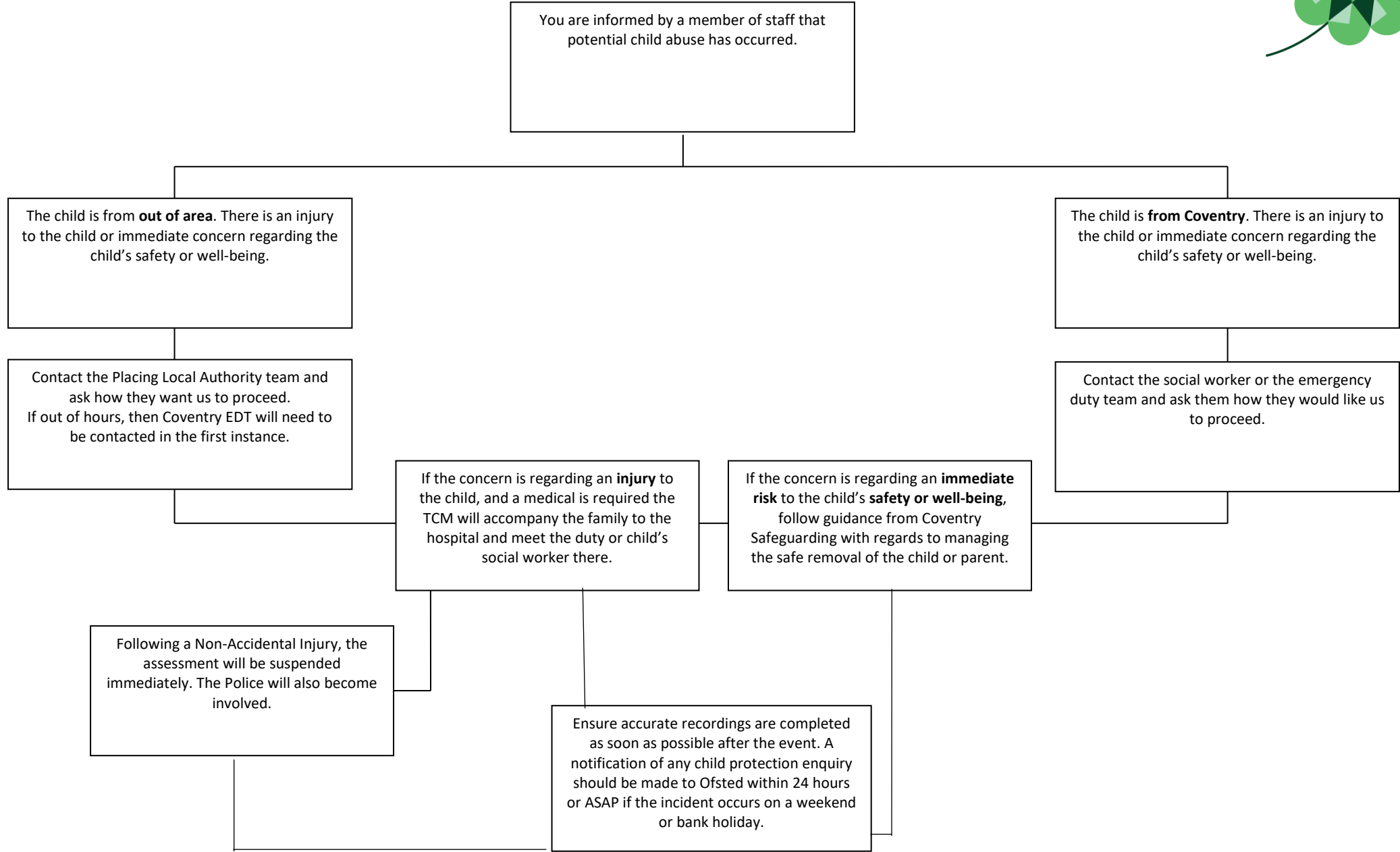
Staff members are only able to supply Personal references for others. They must not use headed paper that belongs to the Centre.

Only the Executive Team, and/or the HR Team, can provide references relating to the professional capacity of employees/former employees of the Centre.

Failure to Report

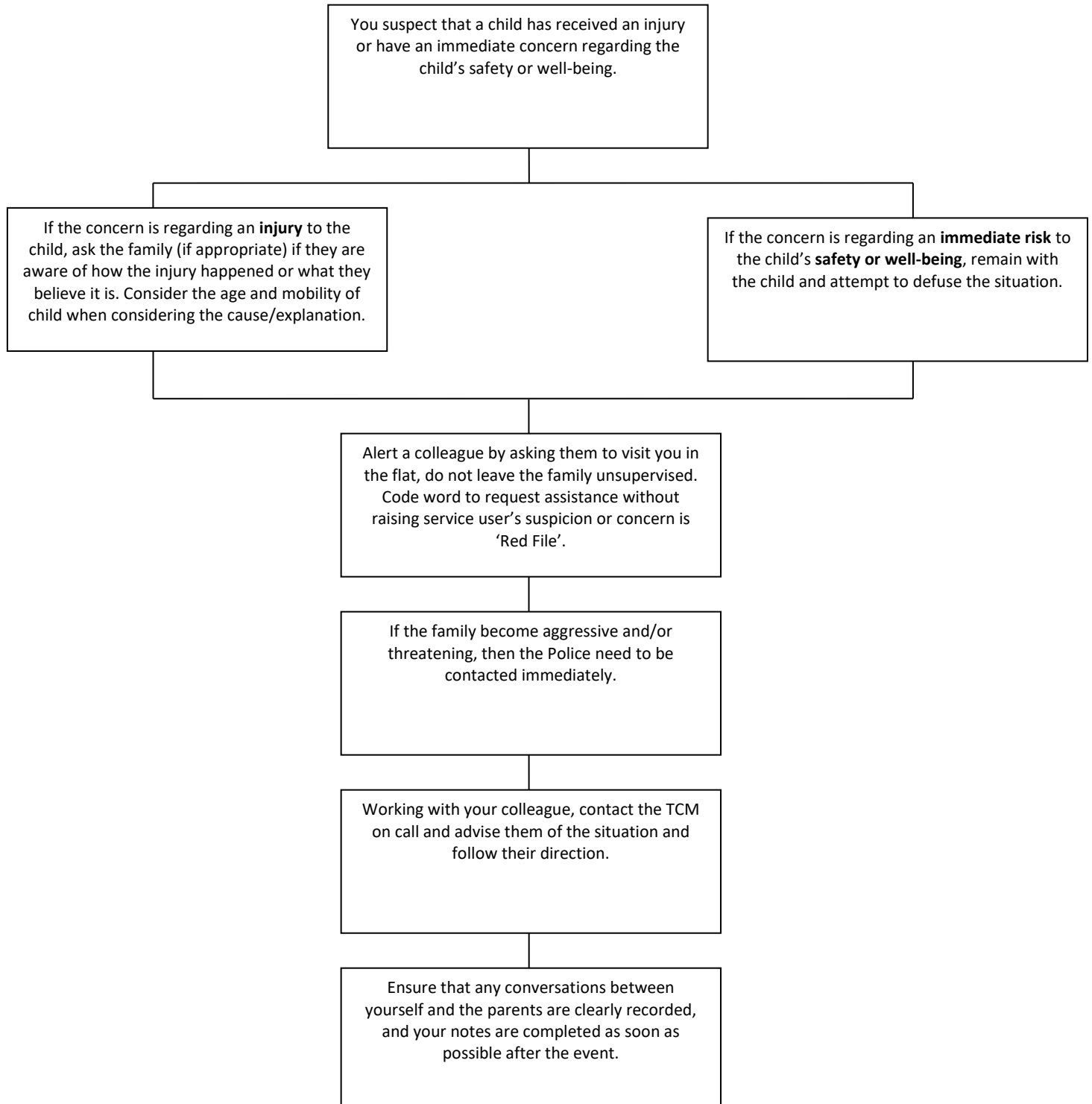
Failure by a member of staff to report actual or suspected physical or sexual abuse of a child by another member of a staff or other person having contact with the child may constitute a disciplinary offence.

Child Protection Procedures – Dudley Lodge Executive/Senior Management





Child Protection Procedures – Dudley Lodge Family Assessment Worker



Child Protection Procedures – Coventry

Staff

In addition to our own policy in respect of Child Protection, we need to ensure we also adhere to the safeguarding procedures as stipulated by Coventry Local Authority. Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership maintain their Child Protection Procedures online.

You can refer to the procedures at any time via the internet using the following website address: -

<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/page/contents>

Director/Trustees

The Charity Commission have provided guidance for Director/Trustees titled 'Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees', therefore Director/Trustees should also refer to this guidance and follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees#history>