



PUDDLEDUCKS Nursery & Pre-School

ESCALATION POLICY

Resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children

Policy Statement

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency on a child protection or child in need case is not a safe decision. Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action
- Communication

The safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in any professional disagreement and any unresolved issues should be addressed with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the child.

All workers should feel able to challenge decision-making and to see this as their right and responsibility in order to promote the best internal and/or multi-agency safeguarding practice. This policy provides workers with the means to raise concerns they have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- a) avoiding professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- b) resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly
- c) identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children.

Professionals should utilise existing processes within their own agencies when seeking advice regarding concerns about children and young people. Professionals should seek advice in the first instance from their designated/nominated safeguarding or child protection lead in order to differentiate between a safeguarding and service decision.

Timescales

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected. Some disagreements regarding safeguarding decisions will require speedy resolution. In all cases where a professional thinks a child is at imminent risk of harm and another agency disagrees they should refer direct to their Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board nominated person named overleaf after consulting quickly with their named Safeguarding Lead or line manager (where the safeguarding lead is not available) within their agency. For all other cases, efforts should be made by all involved to resolve the dispute in a timely way. The primary focus must always be on ensuring that the safety and welfare of the child concerned is assured whilst discussions take place.

As a guide the timescales for escalation through the stages set out below should be no longer than **5 working days**, where the child is not felt to be at imminent risk of harm.

Stages of the policy

Pre-escalation - Professional : Professional



In my service this is me

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe should initially consult their safeguarding lead or line manager to clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem; to be specific as to what the disagreement is about; and what they aim to achieve. They should also be able to evidence the nature and source of their concerns and should keep a record of all discussions. Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level. This would normally be between the people who disagree. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this option unsupported.

Stage One: Manager : Room Leaders



In my service this is June Goddard/Ali Perry.

If the problem is not resolved between the professionals as above, the concerned worker should contact their manager within their own agency who should raise the concerns with the equivalent manager in the other agency to seek resolution.

Stage Two: Senior Manager:



In my service this is Beverley Smith.

If the problem is not resolved at stage one the room leaders will report to their respective senior service manager (sometimes referred to as a tier 3 manager) or their organisations' named safeguarding lead. The two senior managers or safeguarding leads must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

Stage Three: Refer via the WSCB

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences at stage two the matter should be referred to the nominated WSCB representative for the agency as set out overleaf. If the agency does not have a nominated representative the matter must be referred to the Safeguarding Board Manager.

In each case the nominated representative/Board Manager will liaise with the Independent Chair of the Board as a matter of urgency and, in discussion with the nominated WSCB representative of the agency with whom the dispute is being raised (where applicable) a final decision will be reached and communicated to all parties within **3 working days**.

Documenting discussions and decisions

At all stages of the process, actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued. Following resolution, it may be useful for individuals to debrief in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

At the level the matter has been resolved between parties, the WSCB 'Notification of an Escalation' form must be completed by the manager who resolved the concern and forwarded to the WSCB Business Support email address below. This notification form will enable WSCB to collate evidence of escalations and that they are being resolved at

Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board Nominated Persons:

Please refer to Appendix 1 of the Escalation policy template from WSCB for nominated person details and Notification of an escalation form dated October 2015 - Attached to hard copy in setting

This policy was reviewed in January 2017. Date of next review January 2018.