

Parish of St David's Church, Moreton-in-Marsh with St Mary's Church, Batsford

Good Practice in Caring for Children

1. Ratios of adults to children and young people

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to children for any visit.

Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe, as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources.

Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. There should be a minimum of one adult in charge. In addition to the adult in charge there should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency.

Below are suggested ratios of adult to child, recommended for a specific indoor/outdoor activity or holiday event. These are the ratios required in regulations governing day care for under 8s.

	Adult	:	Children
Two years and under	One	:	Three
Three years	One	:	Four
Four to eight years	One	:	Eight

For children over eight, there is no official guidance. Suggested ratios from the NSPCC which we will adopt are:

Eight to Twelve years	One	:	Eight
Twelve years plus	One	:	Ten

NB. There must still be two adults present for any activity.

These ratios should be maintained for all regular activities, but in some instances an activity may be allowed to continue without the required ratio. **For example**, an occasion where one leader does not turn up for Sunday Club. In this situation the leaders present (at least 2) must inform a staff member. If children or leaders are endangered or unwilling to continue then the activity should not go ahead. For off-site activities correct ratios must be in place at the start of the activity.

2. Parental Consent

- a. **Offsite Activities.** Parents must complete a consent form for their child for any off-site activity, particularly if it includes transport.
- b. **Contact details.** In a situation where a child/ young person is present without a parent or guardian then contact details for a parent/ guardian should be obtained as well as proof that the parent is happy with their child's attendance at the activity. Furthermore the parent must have clear lines of communication with those leading the group.

3. General Good Practice for working with Children

Always conduct yourselves in a way which guards against potential misunderstanding (either from the child, or an observing adult). Remember that we live in a culture which will often jump to conclusions or assume the worst about a situation involving children.

- 1) Avoid spending time with a child/ young person which is out of sight of another adult, e.g. taking a single child to the toilet. If this is unavoidable, inform another adult of where they will be and for what purpose
- 2) Take particular care around use of toilets and washing facilities. If you need to take a child to the toilet make sure another adult knows you are doing this.
- 3) Be cautious about physical contact with children, especially those of the opposite sex.
- 4) Never shout, lose your temper or strike a child. Ensure you know beforehand what sanctions you will use if you need to apply discipline.
- 5) Ensure that parents are able to contact you and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Judith Hartridge) about any concerns they may have.
- 6) Ensure that children know that they can speak to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Judith Hartridge) about any concerns they may have.

4. ABUSE

Signs of Abuse

Those who work with children have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a child. It is important to keep an open mind and consider carefully what is causing you concern. You may discuss your concerns with other responsible adults, but you retain responsibility to act on any concerns you have. The following are examples of things that may cause concern, but **they should not be taken as proof that abuse has occurred.**

- Physical abuse: unexplained injuries or those that have received no medical attention, hidden injuries, signs of neglect;
- Sexual abuse: allegations made by the child or young person, preoccupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults;
- Emotional abuse: regression of behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention seeking, running away/stealing/lying, looking uncared for.
- Neglect: inadequate clothing, being left alone for long periods, poor muscle tone, sores, rashes, thin or swollen tummy, poor hygiene/ health, being anxious or withdrawn, early sexual activity.
- Other: unexplained reluctance of children to be left in the care of an individual – unexplained mood changes.

If a child wishes to talk about abuse

It is usually very difficult for a child or young person to tell someone that they are being abused. So...

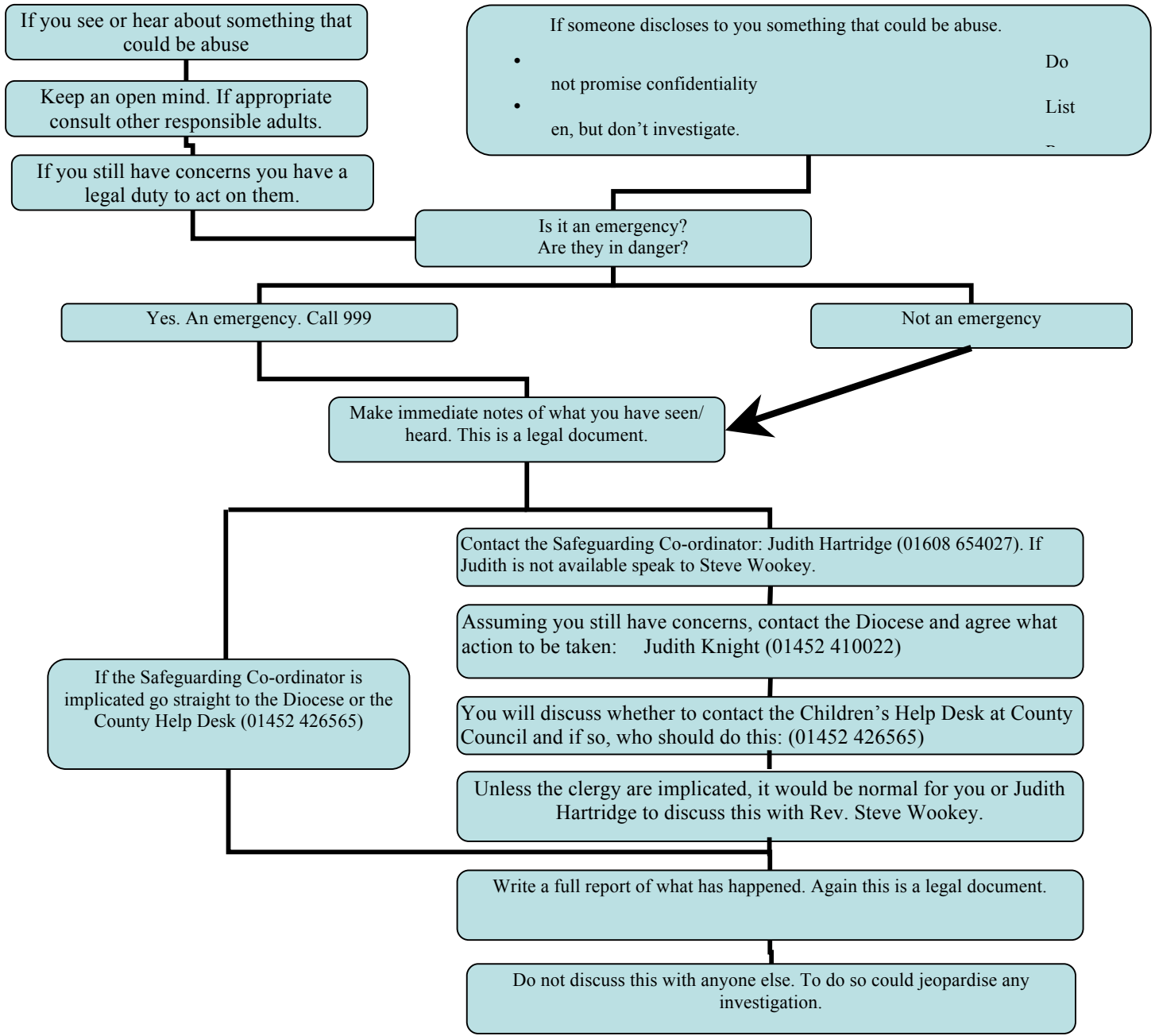
- Let them know that you will listen to anything they have to tell you, but that there are some things so serious that you have to tell someone else.

Do not promise confidentiality;

- Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly;

- Listen carefully and do not stop a young person who is revealing painful events;
- Never push for information or ask leading questions
- Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened;
- Reassure the child or young person they were right to tell you;
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens;
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. **Record the date, time and location and whether other people were present. Keep the handwritten record.**

Your responsibility if you suspect abuse



If someone discloses to you something that could be abuse.

- Do not promise confidentiality
- Listen, but don't investigate.