

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

Orchard House is committed to safeguarding children/young people and to its safeguarding policies and action to ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities in the protection and welfare of children/young people.

The Orchard House policy sets out our commitment to keeping children/young people safe. This applies to all children/young people who are resident at Orchard House or to whom Orchard House comes into contact with.

All of our procedures are in line with:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Children's Act 1989
- UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Residential Family Assessment Centre Regulations 2002 (as amended in 2013)
- National Minimum Standards for Residential Family Assessment Centres

All staff are recruited in line with safer recruitment processes.

All staff must read and be aware of all policies and procedures within Orchard House as well as the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

1. Safeguarding Procedures

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of all members of staff and associated individuals of Orchard House to recognise and assume their individual responsibility to exercise particular care, vigilance and energy in our approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children/young people at Orchard House. All those involved with children/young people should be particularly mindful of their vulnerability and be responsive to any concerns which emerge about their care.
- 1.2 These procedures relate to responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse and/or neglect of a child/young person. The definition of a child/young person in respect to these procedures is anyone who is under the age of 18.
- 1.3 **Safeguarding / Child Protection / Concern Procedure**
Dealing with Safeguarding / child protection issues must take Priority over all other work. If you see, hear, or are told of any issue that raises a concern about possible abuse. This is what you should do:

1.4 **Respond**

Stay calm, listen to what is said, and reassure the child / young person. Do not challenge, criticise, or promise confidentiality. You should not investigate but listen and gather as much information as they want to tell you. You can ask for clarification-i.e. "what do you mean? Can you explain?"

1.5 **Report**

You should verbally pass this concern on to Safeguarding on Call. Safeguarding takes priority over all other work.

1.6 **Record**

- Complete the AF.
- Date, sign and record who, what and when.

Record facts and use the language the young person uses. If you add an opinion make it clear that it is your opinion. **The report must be written before you leave work and directly after you have verbally handed over to Safeguarding on Call.**

Safeguarding on call, along with the local authority social worker will:

- Assess the issue reported.
- Identify who will be contacted. This will include parents/carers, the placing local authority and Somerset local authority.
- Discuss and identify any follow up work that may be required with any partners.

Safeguarding young people- is everyone's responsibility.

2. At Orchard House we work to the Working Together to Safeguard Children definitions of abuse.

2.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (anyone under the age of 18 years) is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

2.1.1 Protection of children from maltreatment

2.1.2 Preventing impairment of children's health or development

2.1.3 Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

2.2 **Physical Abuse** A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

2.3 **Emotional Abuse** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children

frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

2.4 **Sexual Abuse** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

2.5 **Neglect** The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

3. **Allegations of abuse can be made concerning:**

- A family at Orchard House.
- A member of staff working at Orchard House.
- A visitor to Orchard House.
- A member of a child/young person's family.
- Anyone outside Orchard House.

4. **Child Protection concerns can also be raised as a result of, this is not an exhaustive list:**

- Bullying
- Racism
- Substance abuse including alcohol
- Violence to a child/young person
- Mental health, including self-harm / non suicidal self-injury
- Sexualised behaviour
- Young carers
- Any behaviour, which is clear that a child/young person is/or is likely to suffer significant harm
- A child/young person being involved in prostitution
- Child/young person sexual exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Faith abuse
- Gang violence
- Child criminal exploitation and county lines
- Exposure to domestic abuse

- Honour based violence
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation
- Involvement in radicalization
- Online abuse including:
 - Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical extremist views
 - Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children/young adults and
 - Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm for example, sending and receiving explicit images or online bullying.

4.1 It is essential that all staff are clear in what action to take if they believe that the safety and welfare of a child/young person is compromised or if they observe or have reported to them possible evidence of abuse.

4.2 In addition to being considered a child protection concern, Orchard House is required to report to the police or social care any evidence of child abuse or of unauthorised persons picking up, contacting children/young people within Orchard House, or observed trying to make contact with children/young people outside Orchard House.

4.3 The team will report any safeguarding concerns regarding any other children/young people who are not resident at Orchard House who may be implicated in possible abuse through contact with families and/or their visitors.

5. The following guidance must be followed when a child/young person chooses to disclose abuse:

5.1 Remember the child/young person has chosen to tell you and is very likely to have worked out in their head what they are going to say. Your task is to listen to what the child/young person says and to allow them to complete without interruption.

5.2 Carefully record what the child/young person says using the words that they use. Ensure that you do this at the earliest opportunity.

5.3 Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing in telling you and explain that someone will take action to ensure that they are safe.

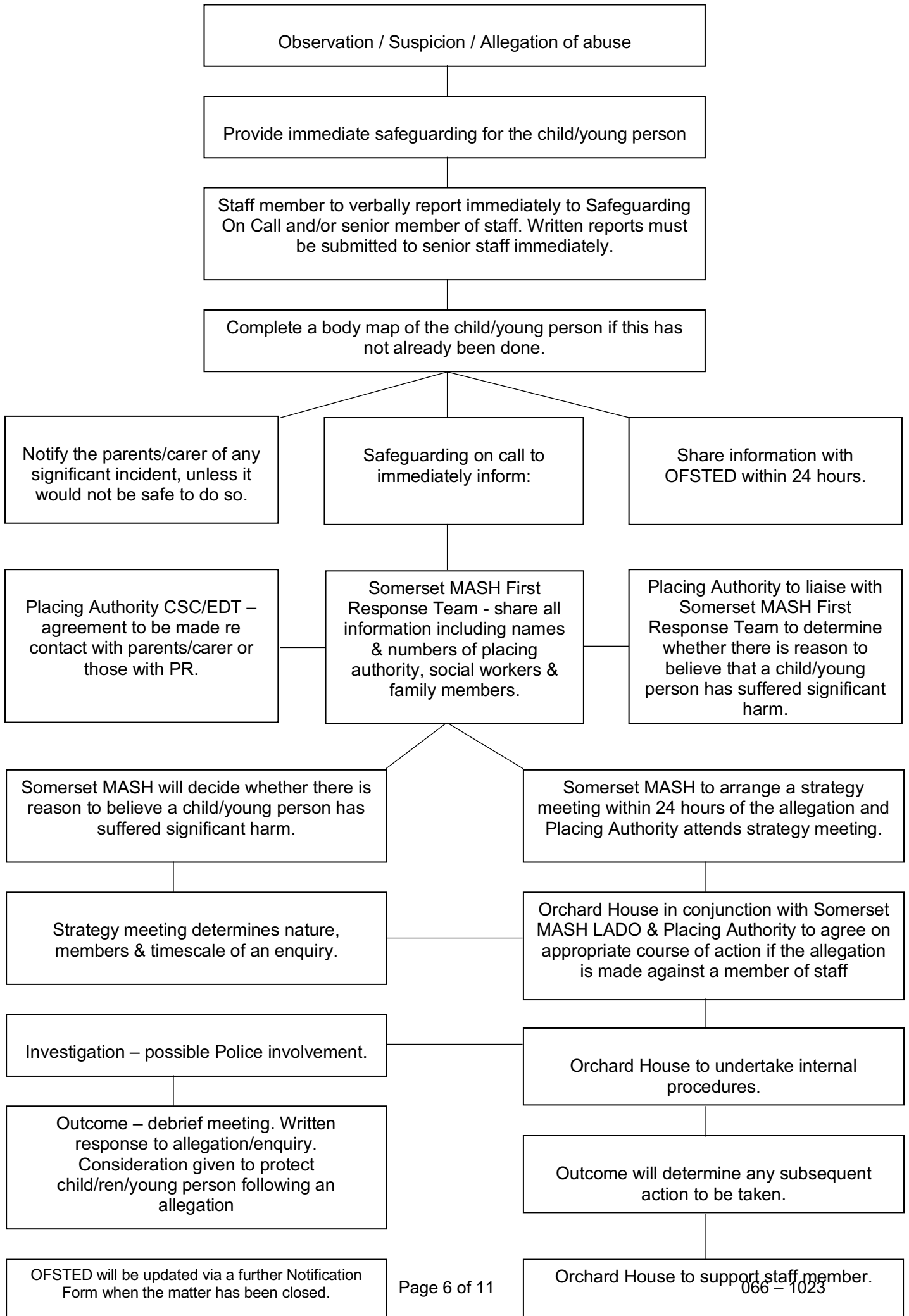
5.4 Never promise confidentiality and that you are unable to keep it a secret. Remember that children almost always tell an adult what is happening, as they want the abuse to stop.

5.5 Tell the child/young person what action you will take and who you will pass the information on to.

5.6 Remember that it is not your role to question the child/young person about an allegation or disclosure, or to ask for any demonstration of the alleged abuse. Your role is only to listen to the child/young person's account, which is freely given.

- 5.7 Do not ask leading questions which could 'put words in their mouth' or give your own ideas of what might have happened e.g. "where did Fred touch you" only ask "what do you want to tell me?" or "is there anything else you want to say?".
- 5.8 It is not your role to investigate the allegation or disclosure, if you do this you could potentially sabotage any investigation. All staff have a duty and responsibility to support any investigation which may occur.
- 5.9 Ensure that you do not disclose the allegation to people who do not need to know, if you are in any doubt discuss this with a member of the senior management, safeguarding on call or the Registered Manager prior to any other discussions.
- 5.10 Details, concerns and fears should not be discussed with the parents/carer, anyone else involved in the care of the young person or anyone named in an allegation before safeguarding on call, the Registered Manager or Director of Services has discussed this with the social services department and other agencies that need to be informed.

6. The Safeguarding Process



- 6.1 All details will be passed to the placing authority and Somerset Children's Services. Who will decide whether a child/young person has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm and therefore a Section 47 Enquiry (Children Act 1989) should take place.
- 6.2 If an allegation is made against a staff member at Orchard House the Registered Manager or Director of Services, in conjunction with the Somerset Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the child/young person's placing authority will agree on appropriate course of action. It is likely that the staff member will be sent home, as a neutral act, whilst the Child Protection Process is being followed.
- 7. There are three strands to the Child Protection process, these are:**
- Concerns have been substantiated and criminal proceedings are underway.
 - Concerns have not been substantiated but it is not appropriate or there is insufficient evidence to pursue a criminal investigation.
 - Staff disciplinary investigation within Orchard House.
- 8. Support to a child during and after a Child Protection enquiry.**
- 8.1 If a strategy meeting is to be held it will address the support that will be offered to a child/young person during the process and who should inform the child of the Section 47 Enquiry. This will be determined at the strategy meeting and must not be approached by any member of staff.
- 8.2 Guidance will be given to staff by the Registered Manager and/ or Director of Services in conjunction with senior staff.
- 9. Support to staff during and after a Child Protection enquiry**
- 9.1 All staff are entitled to a high standard of support during the process of any enquiry.
- 9.2 The Registered Manager or Director of Services, supported by the HR Manager will explain to each staff member the process that is being followed and will ensure that they fully understand their rights and responsibilities in the situation. It is not appropriate for the Registered Manager or Director of Services to discuss the progress of the enquiry or to express an opinion about the likely outcome.
- 9.3 Attention will be given to the impact on the staff team within Orchard House and recommendations regarding on-going support for the staff team would be included in the report in the de-briefing information.
- 9.4 Once the outcome of the investigation has been decided the Registered Manager or Director of Services, supported by the HR Manager will ensure that, as far as possible they will inform staff members of this outcome and give a clear indication of what procedures will be followed within Orchard House. The only exception to this will be in instances of police involvement.
- 9.5 In the event of concerns not being substantiated and on further actions being taken, support will be given to the staff member in recognition of the stressful nature of these enquiries.

9.6 All recommendations and outcomes will be carefully recorded and placed on the Personnel file of the member of staff.

10. Arrangements for Protecting Children

10.1 The Orchard House Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is in accordance with Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines. The procedures at Orchard House should compliment this and not act in contradiction to them.

10.2 There is no longer a handbook. Instead Somerset Safeguarding Child Partnership continually update their website. The Team Leaders and staff at Orchard House are aware of this as this forms a central part to all staff induction and child protection will have a high profile in both team meetings and staff supervision.

10.3 Our aim is to ensure that children/young people resident on the premises of Orchard House or involved with Orchard House services are protected from abuse or neglect and that suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect are properly responded to.

10.4 We maintain our procedures in line with the Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002 (as amended) for responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect and these procedures are known and understood by staff.

10.5 Our local Children's Social Care Department is situated at Somerset County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY. Tel: 01823 355285. New referrals will be made via Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224.

10.6 In order to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, visitors to the centre are required to sign into the centres visitors book and, other than parents/carers/approved external professionals such as social workers, guardians no person will have unsupervised access to children and young people.

10.7 In order to monitor, evaluate and review, all child protection and safeguarding concerns are a fixed item on the agenda for management meetings. This is to ensure that all staff remain alert to signs and symptoms of abuse and that they use the systems in place appropriately to report these concerns.

11. General Principles for minimising risk

11.1 Our procedures for arranging, planning and carrying out residential assessments is designed to minimise the risks for children/young people, parents/carers and staff as well as providing the highest quality information to inform the courts. The stages in the assessment process which provide information which will help to protect children/young people and minimise risk of abuse or neglect include the following:

11.1.1 All parents/carers and children/young people are assessed by qualified staff before admission is agreed and this includes access to background information from the local authority and other parties. The process of history taking includes a careful review of any experience of abuse or neglect by the adults or children/young person, aspects of personality of the parents/carers involved with particular attention to behaviours suggesting a risk of abuse.

- 11.1.2 Provide regular safeguarding training to all staff to reinforce the importance of safe monitoring and to remind them of our safeguarding procedures. This training will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- 11.1.3 Ensure that any member of staff responsible for 1 to 1 monitoring formally transfers the responsibility to another member of staff and that this is recorded on the Assessment Form.
- 11.1.4 Ongoing guidance, supervision and training to be provided by the senior safeguarding team (in the context of handover) to ensure clarity in the handover procedures and to ensure that the member of staff responsible for any family immediately communicates and records any concerns or incidents.
- 11.1.5 Senior members of the safeguarding team continue to be available 24 hours per day, as safeguarding on call. They also continue to be supported by a first on call system, which will be available 24 hours per day.

12. Confidentiality and information sharing

- 12.1 Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children and young people with other professionals particularly investigating agencies. All recording and information sharing regarding Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns are completed in line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR). Staff should be aware that GDPR **does not** prevent us sharing information when it is regarding Safeguarding or Child Protection concerns.

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Author	Orchard House Management Team					
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	May 2017	May 2018	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Oct 2020	Oct 2021
	Oct 2022					
Review due	October 2024					

Safeguarding Flow Chart

If you see a suspicious injury including; bruise, mark, lump, blister, burn, bite mark, cut, graze, imprint or scratches (please see flow chart in each house for examples of non-accidental injuries).



**Safeguard the child by providing a physical presence.
Use the team to support you.
Call safeguarding on call.**

**Describe where the injury is, it's size and why you are concerned.
Safeguarding on call will provide a plan of action.**

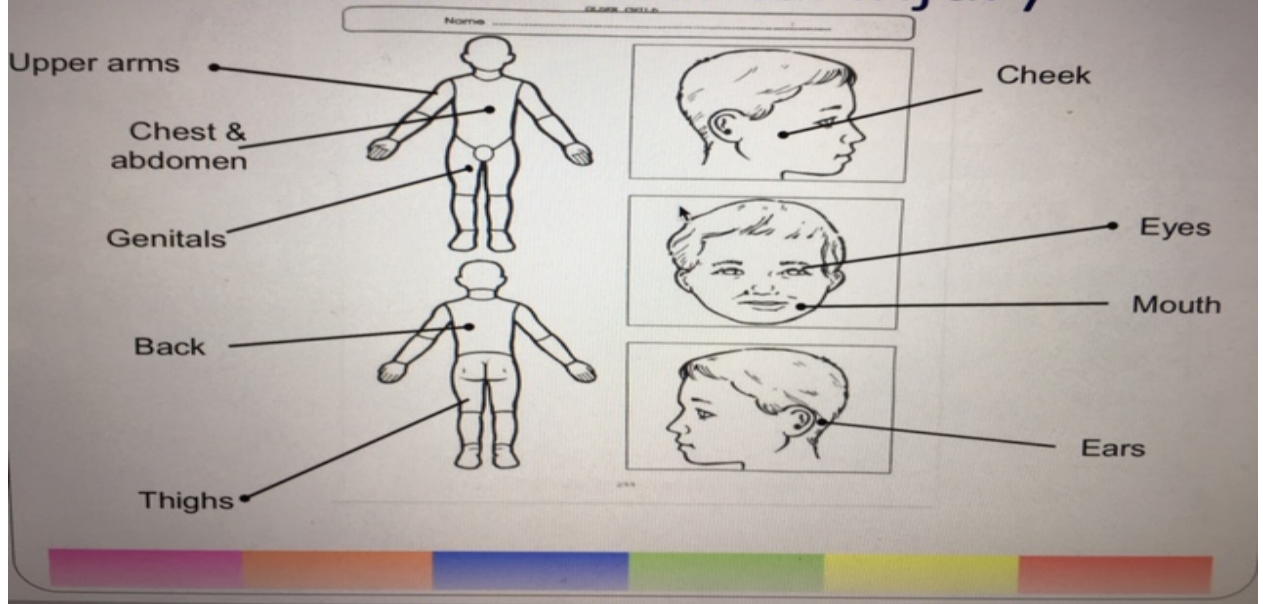


**Complete a body map.
If possible, take photos of the injury with the house camera (not your own).
If you are not able to safeguarding on call will do this.**

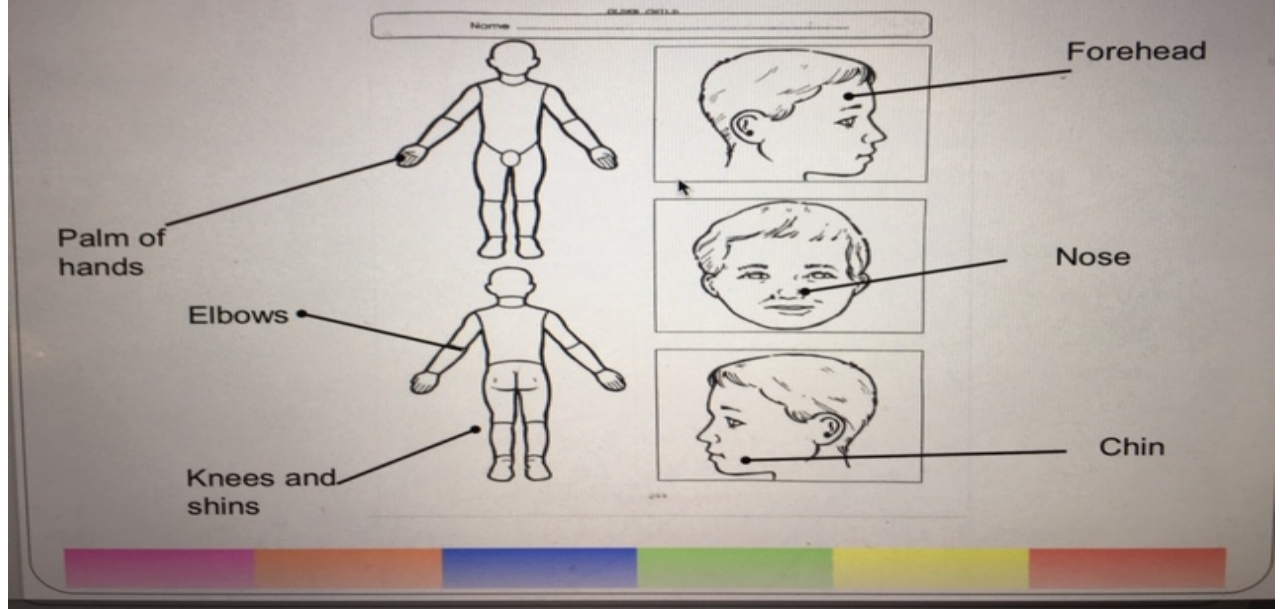


**Download footage of any discussions with the parents.
Record accurately on the AF in the safeguarding box.
Record the guidance that you receive from safeguarding on call.**

Sites of non-accidental injury



Sites of Accidental Injury



Common Sites for Non-accidental injury		Common Sites for Accidental injury
Eyes	Front of	Forehead
thighs		Nose
Ears	Back of	Chin
thighs		Palms
Cheeks	Stomach	Crown
Genitals		Bony spinal protuberances
Buttocks		Elbows
Mouth		Iliac crest (hip)
Shoulder		Shins
Chest		Knees
Upper arms		
Inner arms		