



Child Protection Policy

Our number one priority is the safety of both member families and SafeCircle, therefore all adults working with or using the services of SafeCircle should be aware of our policy in the protection of children.

Child Protection is everybody's business and this is especially true for those working with children. As a SafeCircle Sitter recruit it is important that you understand your role in this.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, students or anyone working on behalf of SafeCircle.

The Purpose of this policy:

- To protect children and young people who receive SafeCircle's services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

SafeCircle believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse or harm of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

What does Child Protection and Safeguarding mean?

Working Together 2013, defines "safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children" as:

- *Protecting children from maltreatment.*
- *Preventing impairment of children's health or development.*
- *Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.*
- *Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.*

Working Together 2013 also describes "Child Protection" as;
'Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm'.

Legal framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

Under the Children Act 1989 those under the age of 18 years are considered as children and young people who require protection from harm under the act.

Signs and symptoms of child abuse:

For guidance on signs and symptoms of child abuse follow the link below:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>

Responding to disclosures:

If a child makes a disclosure of abuse to you as a babysitter during your booking, or at any other time to a member of SafeCircle staff, it is essential that you are aware of how to appropriately respond to this;

1. Do not offer the child any **emotional response** to their disclosure (ie cry, show fear or upset).
2. **LISTEN** to the child very carefully and do not interrupt them at any point.
3. **Do not ask any questions** of the child as this could be seen as tampering of evidence if brought before a court.
4. Tell the child that you are thankful they have told you about it but that you will **have to tell someone** who can help.
5. **NEVER** promise that everything will be ok.
6. **Write everything that the child has told you down** immediately after you are alone. If the disclosure is made whilst the child is still hours from bedtime, excuse yourself to the kitchen/bathroom if they are old enough to be left to write this down. Write exactly what the child said to you, any descriptions made of the person/place, date,

time or event that may have taken place. This is essential as evidence for a possible police investigation.

7. **Do not tell the parents** about the disclosure as this will be done by head office if required.

What to do if you become concerned about a child?

If for any reason you become concerned about the welfare of a child or a disclosure of abuse is made whilst caring for one of our member families you will be expected to follow the below process;

1. If the concerns are such that the immediate safety of the child is at risk contact police on 999 or your local out of hours Child Protection duty team. Please ensure that you have this number available in case of an emergency.
2. If the issue is not an immediate safety issue but you feel warrants professionals to be made aware please contact your local Child Protection incoming duty team. This information can be found on the local council website under social care and child protection.
3. If you are unsure if your concerns require action you can contact us at head office and discuss this in more detail. Our managing director is a Child Protection Social Worker and will be able to offer you guidance and support through the process.
4. If you at any point make contact with the police or local safeguarding team you will also need to inform us at head office via email detailing the concerns and the actions you undertook. A copy of any notes you made must also be sent with the email within 24 hours of the disclosure.
5. SafeCircle Sitters will need to make themselves available for contact by the child protection team following any referral made so that all information can be obtained first hand from the person receiving the disclosure or raising the concerns.

A flow chart for actions can be found here: [LINK](#)

If you feel uncomfortable returning to the member family following these concerns please let us know and we will not offer you any further bookings for them.

Head office responsibilities and recording:

All reported concerns for a child will be recorded by head office and passed onto the appropriate agencies if it is felt that a safeguarding issue is presenting. Information must be clearly recorded against the member family's file. This must include an original copy of the notes made by the babysitter.

Head office will remain responsible for ensuring all parents/carers are made aware of any referrals made the child protection agencies, and managing any complaints in respect of this.

Confidentiality and Data Protection:

The welfare of a child or young person is of paramount concern. Confidentiality and privacy should be respected wherever possible however if this places a child or young person at risk information sharing is required therefore confidentiality must be breached.

All personal information collected will be processed and files on our secure computer system to manage your application and ongoing role. Your personal information will not ordinarily be disclosed to anyone outside the agency (on a need to know basis) without first seeking your permission, unless there is a statutory reason for doing so.

All documents recorded by head office in respect of child protection concerns and family information including; name, dates of birth and addresses can be made available to relevant safeguarding agencies should this be required for the purpose of undertaking an assessment or should we be required to provide such by law.

Documentation held by SafeCircle can be requested by the subject person through a written request which will be responded to within 40 working days. Requests for access to records made by any other agency will need to comply with the relevant legislation to enable this information to be disclosed ie Child Protection concerns.

Information sharing will be on a strict need to know basis only. The lead for child protection for SafeCircle Sitters is founder Keeley Black.

Useful contact details:

Named person for child protection and deputy: Keeley Black Tel: 0203 811 0445

Local police -

Tel: 101

NSPCC –

Tel: 0808 800 5000 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine –

Tel: 0800 1111 (textphone 0800 400 222)

Acknowledgements:

These procedures have been created with resources and guidance from SafeNetwork.org.uk (an NSPCC organisation).

This procedure is consistent with the government guidelines set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, HM Government, March 2013, and with the Children’s Workforce Development Council’s publication, Recruiting Safely: Safer recruitment guidance helping to keep children and young people safe, CWDC, 2009.