



Referrals to Children's Social Care (First Response)

Children's Social Care are part of Hackney's Social Services department. The team that the school works with is called First Response. When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, the procedure in the Child Protection Policy (to be found on our website: <http://www.shoreditchpark.hackney.sch.uk>) is followed. This means we would contact the First Response team.

We thought it might be helpful to outline in a little more detail what happens in this situation and what the school's responsibilities are, as we understand that such referrals can be confusing or upsetting for families.

The Referral Process:

1. A member of staff may notice something about a child or a child may tell them something that causes them concern. The adult will refer this to one of the the Safe Guarding Leads but, following good practice, will not question the child in detail or talk to the family about the disclosure. They also will treat this matter with the appropriate level of confidentiality.
2. The Safe Guarding Lead will then decide if the matter should be referred to the First Response Team for advice and guidance. It is the school's duty to do so and following best practice advice, we will refer most disclosures as we are not in a position to judge their seriousness or importance but our role is to refer to the experts.
3. The referral will usually be a phone call, followed up by a completed referral form.
4. The school will then act on the advice given by First Response as to how to inform the family of the situation. In some instances they will tell us they are not going to take further action in which case the school will inform the family of what has happened and the reaction from First Response. In some instances we are told not to say anything to families as First Response will contact them, in others to make the family aware of the referral. It is not the responsibility of the school to discuss the referral in detail or to discuss what the likely outcome of the referral will be.
5. First Response Team will then contact the family and take the matter forward.

We would like to stress that we appreciate that this process can be very upsetting for parents and carers and can make them feel vulnerable and anxious. In the past, it has also led some families to lose trust in the school which we would never want. Like you, our position is always acting to the best interest for your child and we have a duty both morally and in law to keep them safe and follow the correct protocols. We would always aim to work in partnership with you to ensure that any issues raised by safe guarding referrals are resolved so that your child can continue to have a happy and successful education at Shoreditch Park Primary School.