



Remember, any child could be at risk of harm. They can live in well-off or poor families, be of any age or any ethnic or cultural background.

Some families deliberately avoid contact with professionals who can help and support them and their children. Therefore we need you to tell us of any concerns.

Reporting your concerns to social care DOES NOT mean that a family will have their children taken away. It is always our aim to keep families together. When an allegation is made, social workers work with other agencies to make sure a child or young person is safe and their needs are met. In some cases, social workers and police officers work together to investigate of child abuse.



This leaflet is produced by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board and Bournemouth & Poole Local Safeguarding Children Board.

DSCB

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Working together to keep Dorset's children and young people safe.

DSCB

Dorset Safeguarding Children Board



Raising Awareness Children at Risk

A guide to help you safeguard a child

A child can be harmed anywhere, at any time, by anyone.



Children can be harmed in different ways and it is **your responsibility** to make sure that they are protected, even if they are not your own.

If a child is harmed, it is usually because of the way adults or other children behave towards them. It can also happen if adults fail to provide proper care for them. **Harming or neglecting a child is always wrong but it is never the child's fault.**

some signs to look out for

You may be concerned about a child if he or she:

- is frequently *dirty, smelly, hungry or inadequately dressed*
- is *constantly insulted*, sworn at, humiliated or is constantly blamed for things that go wrong
- *seems afraid* of their parents or carers
- has illnesses which haven't been treated
- is not properly supervised
- who craves inappropriate attention and affection from any adult
- is growing up in an environment where there is *domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse*
- *displays sexual knowledge or behaviour* which doesn't seem appropriate for their age
- is being *encouraged to be secretive* about their relationship with an adult

- is a *baby with an injury* that they would be too young to get on their own
- has *burns, scalds or bruises* with clear outlines

They may show their unhappiness in many ways, including:

- being unusually nervous, anxious, withdrawn and isolated
- being unusually angry and aggressive
- truanting or running away from home
- using drugs or alcohol
- deliberately causing serious harm to themselves or others

Remember, this leaflet does not cover every possibility. You may have seen other things in a child's behaviour that worries you.



If you have concerns about the safety of a child...
it is your responsibility to report it.

You don't have to give us your name if you don't want to.

who to contact

Children's Social Care	01305 221000
NSPCC or text	0808 800 5000 88858
Dorset Police in an emergency	01305 222222 999

Or, if you know the area in which the child lives, please contact the Children's Services Office directly using the following numbers:

Bournemouth area:	01202 458102
Bridport area:	01308 422234
Christchurch area:	01202 474106
Dorchester area:	01305 221450
Ferndown area:	01202 877445
North Dorset area:	01258 472652
Poole area:	01202 735046
Purbeck area:	01929 553456
Weymouth/Portland area:	01305 760139

Out of Office Hours: 01202 657279

If you have any doubt about reporting your concerns, please remember that **we can only take action if we know something is wrong.**