

Why is this important?

Safe and nurturing environments flourish when families and communities are empowered and encouraged to provide their views on how children and adults-at-risk are safeguarded, and to raise concerns and complaints.

What should we be doing?

Actively engage with families and communities about safeguarding practices.

Provide families and communities with information on the safeguarding policy and practices and the code of conduct for example on a website, in a welcome pack or in a newsletter/bulletin.

Promote awareness of children's rights by providing information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and participating in civic activities and campaigns (e.g. National Child Protection Week).

Consult families and communities in the development and review of local level safeguarding practices, for example by conducting an open forum or including parents and community members on a working party.

Provide opportunities for families and the community to provide feedback on safeguarding practices for example, a safeguarding suggestion box. Respond promptly to feedback.

Encourage families and communities to take an active role in monitoring the safety of their children and adults-at-risk under their care when engaging in activities, ministries and services (including online).

To assist with achieving informed consent, advise families and communities of the details of activities, ministries and services and safeguarding measures put in place for example, supervision arrangements.

Advise families and communities of the roles and safeguarding responsibilities of those conducting activities with or delivering services to children and adults-at-risk. This may include clergy, religious, employees, contractors, other parents, carers or guardian and volunteers.

Provide families and communities with information on how, when and whom safeguarding concerns and complaints can be raised. For example by:

- providing information of the complaints handling process and personnel with specific complaint handling responsibilities;
- promoting the STOPline service;
- providing contact details for the Office for Safeguarding Services; and
- providing contact details for the Local Safeguarding Representative.

Information should be provided in a variety of formats taking into account cultural and language needs (where applicable).

Acknowledge and record all concerns or complaints as soon as possible and take prompt action to manage any immediate safeguarding concerns/risks.

Keep those who raise concerns or complaints informed of progress and any actions taken.