

Visitors and Ofsted

EYFS 2012 requirement **3.61** states, *'Providers must take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises, and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors.'*

The Childcare Register requires childminders to have this procedure in writing.

Sample visitor procedures - we are committed to protecting the children from visitors - unwanted and invited. To protect children from unwanted visitors -

- Doors are locked during working hours (keys safely stored in case of emergency). A chain prevents visitors from gaining access to the house until they have been checked;
- The garden gate is closed and locked and fences are in good repair;
- Visitor credentials (ID) will be checked before they are allowed on the premises;
- If we are unsure about the validity of a visitor they will not be invited onto the premises;
- If we receive an unexpected or unannounced visit from a company such as Ofsted during working hours we reserve the right to ring the company to check that the visitor is genuine before allowing them onto the premises;
- If people such as emergency contacts (pre-arranged) arrive to collect children and we do not know them, we ask for a pre-arranged password to be used. If people arrive to collect children (not pre-arranged) we will speak to someone with parental responsibility for the child first to gain their permission.

To keep children safe...

- From allegations - we shadow visitors and do not leave them on their own in a room with children. This is to protect the visitor and the child. If an allegation of serious harm or abuse is made against a visitor we will follow safeguarding procedures.
- Mobile phones and cameras - if visitors bring mobile phones or cameras to the house we ask that they keep them in their bags and do not use them to take photos of the children.
- In emergencies - we carry out regular fire practices including on occasion (if they are a regular visitor such as the cleaner) when visitors are present. Our emergency procedures are displayed and visitors are asked to read them.
- Intimate care routines - visitors do not and are never asked to carry out intimate care routines.
- Personal belongings - visitors are asked to put coats, bags, shoes, drinks etc out of sight and reach of children.
- Smoking - we inform visitors that they are not allowed to smoke on the premises.
- DBS (formerly known as CRB) checks - regular visitors during working hours eg cleaners and other childminders are DBS checked if this is required by Ofsted.

Recording visitor details - we write details of all visitors in our diary. We include information about the visitors' name, company (if relevant) and time of arrival and departure. Visitors are not required to sign or write in the diary.

You might have information about visitors in other policies and procedures as well. For example, you might -

- Include a sentence in your emergency procedures that says, for example, 'Fire escape plans for adults and children are displayed on notice boards, with escape routes and a fire escape poster is displayed and visitors are informed about emergency escape routes.'
- Include a sentence in your no smoking policy that says, for example, 'Any person who smokes on the premises such as workmen, visitors or teenagers are asked to move onto the road away from the house and garden and put their smoking debris away from areas where children play.'
- Include a sentence in your safeguarding policy (mobile phone and camera section) that says, for example, 'If visitors bring mobile phones or cameras to the house we ask that they keep them in their pockets or bags and do not use them to take photos of the children.'

When writing your safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures you might also want to include visitors as part of your safeguarding commitments. For example -

EYFS 2012 Requirement 3.4 states, '*The safeguarding policy and procedures must include an explanation of the action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.*'

'If an allegation of serious harm or abuse is made against me (childminder's name), a member of my family, my partner (co-childminder), assistant or other member of my household, another minded child, a member of staff or a visitor to my home I will...'

Then go on to write your safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure as advised by your Local Safeguarding Children Board during your most recent training.

Ofsted inspectors and visitors

Some childminders have told us that they have received actions or advice from Ofsted inspectors to ask visitors to sign themselves in and out using a dedicated visitor book. This is NOT a requirement of the EYFS 2012 or Childcare Registers and if it affects your Ofsted inspection grade you must challenge it because it is not acceptable for inspectors to make up requirements that do not exist.