

Monitoring Suggestions for Teachers

Teachers are the only professionals who are in regular day to day contact with school-aged children and, because of that, we have a key role in situations where there are suspicions that a child is being abused. When there are such concerns, it is essential to keep an objective and factual record of all the information available (*DES Procedures, p. 21/22, paragraph 3.6*). We may also be requested, following a child protection conference, to keep a child under observation in a manner that is not inconsistent with our existing duties (*DES Guidelines, p. 28, paragraph 4.5.7*). This hand-out has been created to assist teachers in this regard.

Useful Hint: Enter your observations under the various headings as appropriate. This will help to categorise your observations and enable you to note an emerging pattern or a deteriorating situation.

Possible Areas for Monitoring	Best Practice Suggestions
<p>Name of School <i>Using agreed record form ensure school standard is applied</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record observations using code to protect anonymity of child • Keep in secure place • Strictly confidential
<p>Attendance and Punctuality <i>Dates and times are important, since patterns or absence or lateness can be very revealing. If late, note if brought to school by parent/carer/older sibling and record any explanation offered.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember to sign and date each entry
<p>Appearance, Hygiene and Care <i>Record observations of the child's appearance, for example, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing, no lunch.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record observations in chronological order
<p>Physical Injury <i>Give detailed description including, in the child's or carer's own words, if any explanation is offered.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include sketch of injury, if appropriate
<p>Child's Behaviour <i>A child may become increasingly aggressive, tense, unresponsive or show other signs of distress. Any sexualised behaviour should be noted.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what you have observed factually
<p>Child's Language <i>The child may not have the language/be afraid to verbalise clearly what is happening. They may however drop hints or refer to what is happening obliquely.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record child's exact words, not the adult equivalents
<p>Child's Drawings, Writing or Play <i>A young child may show few signs of abuse when he/she experiences a sense of security in a busy, structured classroom setting therefore careful observation of the child in less formal or unstructured settings are important. Always include the context in your record eg "when returning from the PE Room", "during small break", "when lining up for home time."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember context can be very important
<p>Mood Changes <i>Child may, for example, become quiet and tense towards end of day or if collected by a certain adult. This might also happen on certain days or before or after certain activities. Again, remember to include the context in your recording.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note time, context and situation – facts only

Remember monitoring should be systematic, continuous and requires perseverance