

Child Protection

Advice and Guidance for OCR Assessors



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I. Introduction

Good practice for assessors in safeguarding and child protection involves being an effective and professional channel for information and concerns. Your responsibility is to maintain the highest professional standards with candidates at all times and not put yourself in a position where these professional standards can be questioned.

The purpose of this document is to give assessors advice on their own conduct and on what to do and who to contact if they have any suspicions about the welfare of a child in their role as an assessor.

Those assessors who have other roles – such as that of a teacher – should, in that role, use the appropriate advice, guidance and channels of communication designated by the relevant organisation.

If you have any general questions relating to the advice and guidance in this document, please email OCR's Child Protection Officer, Tim Jackson, at **tim.jackson@ocr.org.uk**.

2. Assessment in Centres

This document is aimed at providing general guidance on conducting assessments wisely and well. Good examiners and verifiers make a conscious effort to appear friendly, open-minded and relaxed, without becoming too familiar. They seek to avoid unnecessary formality.

However, it is essential that a professional distance is kept between themselves and candidates.

Do

- Give candidates as much encouragement as possible;
- Adopt a relaxed, informal and friendly atmosphere;
- Listen to what young people say;
- Keep a physical and professional distance;
- Be aware of the effect that your words and actions may have;
- Be approachable;
- Appear alert, co-operative and open-minded.

Don't

- Stray from the task in the specification;
- Be unnecessarily inquisitive – do not ask for personal details that are not necessary for completion of the assessment;
- Do or say anything that might make a candidate feel uncomfortable;
- Say things that could be interpreted as aggressive, hostile or impatient;
- Be drawn into personal conversations or introduce personal subjects;
- Make comments that could be misinterpreted, such as about their appearance;
- Sit or stand too close to the candidate;
- Stand over the candidate as this may make them feel pressured;
- Meet other than in the agreed assessment venue;
- Exchange personal contact details.

The timing of assessments should be such that they fall within the normal timetable parameters of the department/institution.

There can be a range of possible ways in which a concern might arise during your work for the awarding body. This might involve one of several circumstances, some of which are detailed below:

- Student-teacher relationship;
- Student-other adult relationship;
- Abuse at home;
- Behaviour between older and younger students;
- Behaviour of fellow examiner

All allegations or suspicions of abuse must be taken seriously and treated in accordance with child protection procedures.

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. In all aspects of our work, the needs and interests of children must be put first. If a person raises a concern, it will probably be a candidate to whom you are talking; but it could be anyone. The basic guidance is the same in all cases.

What to say and do

- Make it clear that you have listened and take what has been said seriously;
- Make sure your reaction is calm and professional – do not make judgmental comments;
- Do not promise to keep secrets;
- Explain that you will find people who can help;
- Do not interrupt the person when they are recalling significant events;
- Do not make the person repeat the story;
- Do not prompt or ask leading questions.

What to write down

You should make a written record as soon as possible.

This should include:

- The date, time and place;
- Who was there;
- What you were told and by whom, using the exact words wherever possible;
- The time and date of the alleged incident, if given.

Who to contact

If a concern is raised, you will need to contact OCR's designated Child Protection Officer, Tim Jackson on **01223 552686**. He will give you support and assistance at any stage of the process where you feel unsure/concerned and will act as a liaison point.

When an incident occurs, you should contact OCR as soon as possible and submit a written report by email to **tim.jackson@ocr.org.uk** within two working days.

Inappropriate activities at centres

On occasions, a child protection concern at a centre may arise out of an activity that you are observing. Two possible contexts for this are drama performance and discussions you are observing. If an activity you are watching gives you cause for concern, you will need to consider whether to stop the assessment prior to completion. No activity should continue that might be seen as raising child protection issues.

- If you are concerned about an activity, you should seek advice immediately.
- Contact the awarding body's designated Child Protection Officer, Tim Jackson, on **01223 552686**.
- If there is no answer, contact the main switchboard on 01223 553311 who will put you through to the named alternative.
- If the situation involves potential abuse, follow procedures as given in the 'Who to contact' section above.

3. Concerns about a Colleague

Any allegation of abuse or suspected abuse in relation to a colleague working for OCR must be referred to the designated child protection officer for discussion.

The matter will be dealt with in accordance with OCR's child protection and/or whistleblowing/disciplinary procedures.

This section applies as much to out-of-hours activities as it does to activities that take place within the regular working day. It also applies to concerns about professionals who might abuse in their private lives

as, in such situations, careful consideration would need to take place about whether the employee presents a risk in the work context. If a concern arises during a visit to a centre where the colleague is in direct contact with children, you should contact OCR's designated Child Protection Officer, Tim Jackson on **01223 552686**.

When a concern is raised, you should contact OCR as soon as possible, and submit a written report by email to tim.jackson@ocr.org.uk within two working days.

4. Assessment of Written Materials

If you come across material in written work that gives you cause for concern, you will need to get advice and support on the matter.

It is, of course, not always easy to distinguish between fact and fiction in people's writing, but that should not be seen as a reason to ignore an issue.

If you believe that a piece of work raises potential child protection concerns, you should immediately refer the matter to the designated Child Protection Officer, Tim Jackson, who can be contacted on **01223 552686**. You will normally be expected to send a copy of the written material in question immediately.

OCR will deal with these concerns in liaison with the centre and inform you of the outcome, which may include a child protection referral.

Note: You should always have sufficient time to make a proper assessment of materials, particularly when they are provided prior to a centre visit. Persistent delay in the provision of materials from a centre which threatens to leave you insufficient time to make an assessment should be referred promptly to your supervisor.

www.ocr.org.uk

OCR customer contact centre

Vocational qualifications

Telephone 024 76 851509

Facsimile 024 76 421944

Email vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

Head office

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