

Scenarios

What would you do?

Scenario one:

It is an hour after home-time. You are surprised to see Louise in the corridor as she should be attending a dance class in college that is run by a local dance company. She is visibly upset. You ask her what's upsetting her? Her reply – "I just can't take it anymore. One of the dance teachers makes me feel so dirty, and he is so sneaky, he lets on he is helping me get into the right dance position, no-one else sees him and last time he squeezed me so hard it hurt" She stops abruptly, then says: "It's okay, I know you won't believe me, he already told me that" and turns to walk away.

What do you do?

A – Reassure Louise and explain that she and her parents need to tell the owner of the dance company as it is not run by the college. Offer to find out the correct name and contact number.

B – Reassure Louise and explain what you are going to do next. Inform the College Principal immediately and follow your safeguarding allegations procedure. Bring Louise to a safe place in the college and ensure someone she trusts is with her until her parents arrive.

C – Reassure Louise, suggest she goes home and explain what you are going to do next. You know it is likely the DSL has gone home for the day. You leave a message explaining what Louise has told you and record your concerns in line with your setting's child protection recording guidance.

Scenario two:

Ritchie is 14. He lives with his older sister, her husband and children as his mother died a year ago. His behaviour at home has become increasingly challenging and his sister Abby has told the school on more than one occasion that he is 'out of control', refusing to come in at the time he is told to, and she isn't happy with the group of friends he is hanging around with. She is trying to support him, but he is making homelife really hard to manage. In school, his teachers have reported that they have seen a change in his behaviour, understandably given the circumstances. However, he has started to refuse to do what he is asked, and there are daily outbursts and confrontations with staff and students.

You notice that, for the past couple of weeks, Ritchie has been arriving late to school, is wearing expensive trainers when he should have school shoes and has had his mobile phone taken off him several times as he has been getting a lot of messages and calls during the day. You ask him about this, and he says he doesn't see the point of these rules, and that he doesn't need to be in school all the time as he can make more money working for his friend's older brother. Regarding the phone use during school time, he said that he can't help it if people want to contact him, he has a lot of friends outside of school. He tells you that he is going to keep his head down and not get into trouble with his teachers as he 'doesn't need the hassle'.

What do you do?

A – Tell Ritchie that you are glad that he is going to settle down and you look forward to seeing the improvement.

B – Monitor how Ritchie gets on and keep an eye on his behaviour, punctuality and uniform expectations.

C – Speak to the DSL as you are concerned about the escalation in Ritchie's behaviour and attitude at home and at school, including informing them about the expensive trainers, the mobile phone use and the comments about making money outside of school.

Scenario three:

Billy, 10, is the eldest of four children. He is a pleasant child, always willing to help his teachers and loves to be praised and earn rewards for his good behaviour. He is not very good at concentrating on his schoolwork and he struggles to complete his homework. You are aware that his mother has recently got remarried, and Billy has told you that he doesn't like Ryan, his mother's new husband.

This half term, you have noticed a gradual change in Billy. He has become quieter and is often hungry, he doesn't always bring lunch and staff are giving him food. He appears to be distracted and worried, not joining in games with his friends, preferring to sit on his own.

Today, Billy arrived at school early on his own. He had a bruise on his face and at first didn't want to tell you what happened. After some toast and a drink, he started to cry and said that last night, Ryan had hit him because he caught him taking some crisps out of the cupboard. He said his mum was there and said that it was his own fault as he shouldn't steal food – he was given a dinner and should have eaten it.

What do you do?

A – Tell the DSL immediately and record your concerns in line with your setting's child protection recording guidance. The DSL may need to make a referral to Children's Social Care.

B – Monitor how he gets on and keep an eye on him in school, you should be careful of jumping to conclusions.

C – Suggest a meeting with his mother and her husband.

Scenario 4

Susannah is 11 and has an older brother David, 13. They are often late to school because they travel a long distance to get here. They have been absent for the past two days and the attendance officer has been unable to get hold of their parents. They have returned today arriving at 10.30am and you ask them where they have been. Both children put their heads down and remain quiet. Eventually Susannah says that their mum didn't have bus fare for them. David then tells you that the police came to their house the other night and their dad was arrested and taken back to prison. Their mother did not have any money so they couldn't get to school, and she doesn't have any credit on her phone to let school know. They have walked in today which has taken them a long time. There is no food in the house and their mum is at home with the new baby.

What do you do?

- A** – Tell them that you are glad they are back at school, you will get them some food and they can get on with their day.
- B** – Speak to the attendance officer and let her know that the children are back in school and to authorise their lateness and punctuality as it wasn't their fault.
- C** – Tell the DSL and record your concerns in line with your setting's child protection recording guidance. The DSL may need to make a referral to Children's Social Care.