# Safeguarding guidance for physical punishment consultation with children

It is imperative that any consultations are carried out with the safety and wellbeing of children involved as the paramount consideration. Whilst we have worked hard to make sure that the consultation activities are not designed to intentionally elicit direct disclosures from children, any consultation with children on any subject could lead to information coming to light that suggests a child may be at risk of harm. Further, the subject matter of this consultation is such that if children speak from personal experience they may describe incidents where they have personally experienced physical punishment in the home.

The following guidance will help teachers / adult facilitators to know how to respond should a child disclose any information about themselves or another child that suggests they may be at risk of harm.

**Confidentiality - Setting the scene**

Before any consultation activities with children begin facilitators should explain to children that you want them to feel able to say whatever they want to. People outside of the group won’t need to know who said what. The only time you would need to speak to someone else would be if one of the children said something that made you feel they weren’t safe or needed some help or support outside of the session.

**Managing safeguarding concerns**

Before the session make sure the Designated Safeguarding Person for the school is aware that the session is taking place and you know how to contact them. If a child describes a personal experience of being physically punished in the home you should:

* Allow the child to say what they want to say and not react or pick up on it during the session
* As soon as possible make a written note of what the child has said including the name of the child concerned
* Report the information to the Designated Safeguarding Person in the school immediately after the session

Although some children may describe what we might consider to be low level physical punishment in the home, it’s important not to make a judgement at his stage about how serious it could be. All incidents should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Person who will then follow the correct procedure for escalating any concerns if necessary as directed in the schools safeguarding policy.

**Children who are experiencing violence in the home**

If children are experiencing violence in the home they could find these sessions uncomfortable and upsetting. For some children it could be the first time they have thought about the idea that physically punishing children may not be acceptable or the common experience of all children. Be mindful of children who appear uncomfortable or very withdrawn with the session and plan in advance how you will be supported during the session in order to support them.