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This is a mock example of a Cafcass Safeguarding Letter

The characters and scenarios are fictional

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Cafcass Letter to the Court

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|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Court | Sandford Family Court |
| Case Number | SA12345678 |
| Date of Hearing | 26th May 2023 |

Children subject of the application

| Name of child | Gender | Date of birth | Age |
|--------------------|--------|---------------|-----|
| Daniel Luke Groves | Male | xx/xx/xx | 12 |
| Sandy May Groves | Female | xx/xx/xx | 5 |

Adult parties to proceedings

| Name of party | Gender | Relationship to children | Date of birth |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Matthew Philip Groves | Male | Father | xx/xx/xx |
| Abigail May Groves | Female | Mother | xx/xx/xx |

The Court sent Cafcass the application in the above case, listed for first hearing as above. The purpose of this letter is to inform the Court about Cafcass' work to date.

WARNING: This letter is confidential and the rules of the court prevent it being shared. There may be serious consequences if the information included in this letter is communicated without authorisation and the court may need to be

NOTE: Significant factual errors (not matters disputed by the parties) in this letter should be referred to the author. Any concerns about other aspects of the letter (for example, the extent of enquiries, the opinions expressed in it or matters disputed by the parties) must be addressed in court.

Summary of Cafcass screening actions and outcomes

Documents read: C100 for Mr Groves

Summary of the Application: Daniel (12) and Sandy (5) are the centre of a Child Arrangements Order (spend time with) application made by their father, Matthew Groves. The respondent is the children's mother, Abigail Groves. The parents share parental responsibility. There are no safeguarding concerns highlighted in the application.

Reason for application: The parties separated 5 months ago when Mr Groves left the marital home. He initially had alternate overnight weekend contact with the children from Friday to Sunday, but this became increasingly sporadic. Mrs Groves stopped contact after the children met the girlfriend of Mr Groves.

MIAM (Mediation Information Assessment meeting): Attended by Mr Groves. Exemption claimed by Mrs Groves.

Current arrangements: The children are living with their mother. They currently have no contact with the father which was stopped 3 months ago.

Police Information: There is no trace with respect to Mr Groves and no trace with respect to Mrs Groves.

Sandford Children's Services: Not known.

Sandford Social Services: Not Known

Cafcass records reviewed: Not previously known.

Summary of any risk identification contacts made by Cafcass

The following is a summary of the relevant safeguarding issues raised during the telephone interviews.

Telephone Interview with Mrs Abigail Groves on the 27th April 2023

- Mrs Groves had no safeguarding concerns whilst the children were in the father's care.
- Mrs Groves states that Mr Groves discusses adult information with the children, such as mediation and his application. She states that the children have reported that he has repeatedly asked them if they want to live with him or 50/50 shared care.
- Mrs Groves seeks for Mr Groves to stop being abusive towards her when discussing child arrangements. She states that she has texts from Mr Groves calling her a 'bitch' and a 'despicable and evil mother'.
- Mrs Groves reports that Mr Groves has been regularly abusive and derogatory to her throughout the 12 year marriage.
- Mrs Groves said Daniel and Sandy initially spent every weekend with their father from after school Friday to Sunday evening, but one weekend Sandy came home distressed and did not want to go back when she was introduced to his girlfriend. Daniel became upset that the father was discussing court issues with him and trying to pressure him to

state that he wanted to live with him. Contact was then stopped, which Mrs Groves states was what the children wanted.

- Mrs Groves states that she is always encouraging contact, but feels that responsible thing is to listen to the children and their concerns.
- Mrs states that she stopped contact as the children were not coping with it and stated that they did not wish to see the father at this time.

Telephone Interview with Mr Matthew Groves on the 2nd May 2023

- Mr Groves does not have safeguarding concerns for the children.
- Mr Groves states that the overnight contact stopped after he introduced the children to his new girlfriend who stayed over during one of the weekend contacts.
- Mr Groves states that there were arguments towards the end of the relationship and states that he recognises that these would have been emotionally harmful if witnessed by the children.
- Mr Groves denies pressuring Mrs Groves or being threatening in terms of mediation and contact, although he may have sent a couple of texts out of frustration.
- Mr Groves denies overly sharing information in relation to the application but did explain that Daniel is 12 years of age and has asked questions, to which he has responded to in a neutral and child focussed manner.
- Mr Groves states that he is seeking a Child Arrangements Order to stabilise and ensure regular contact with the children.
- Mr Groves states that both Daniel and Sandy, got on well when they met his girlfriend and that there was no signs of distress from Sandy.
- Mr Groves denies being verbally abusive throughout the marriage and states that it was Abigail who was coercively controlling.
- Mr Groves feels that Mrs Groves is influencing contact and manipulating the children against him.

Analysis of issues arising from safeguarding or risk identification

Sandy (5) is described as a joyful, clever and confident girl. She is in the first year of primary school and neither parent has any concerns for her. Daniel (12) is an active boy and has started to play rugby for his school and for a local club every Sunday.

Mrs Groves is concerned that Sandy appears more affected by the parental dispute than Daniel and has witnessed Mr Groves, 'shouting in anger' and using swear words. However, she believes that Daniels emotional wellbeing has recently been affected with the level of information Mr Groves is sharing with him and putting him under pressure to make adult decisions. Both parents stated that that the breakup of the 12 year relationship was acrimonious and both blame each other for recent disagreements. It is perhaps unfortunate that this matter has had to be brought to the court's attention, and both parents should understand that adult conflict and involving children in adult disputes has the potential to cause significant harm to the well-being of children.

Safeguarding checks are complete, these raise no immediate safeguarding concerns.

Mrs Groves feels that the children should be listened to, that Mr Groves should stop his abusive and derogatory texts and that he should be supervised to ensure that he does not engage in adult conversations with the children. Mrs Groves also feels that it is inappropriate to introduce the children to his girlfriend.

Advice to the Court

- For the Court to decide whether both parties should be required to submit statements detailing their claims of abuse and coercive control and for considerations under Practice Directions 12J. However the Court may feel that this may not be proportionate or necessary given that Mr Groves did have overnight contact for a period after separation, and that Mrs Groves states that she will encourage contact.
- For the Court to decide whether initial contact in a contact centre is appropriate given the concerns raised by the mother about sharing adult information.
- Whether it would be helpful for Cafcass to conduct a Section 7 Report to determine the wishes and feelings of the children, the impact of any harmful conflict on the children and how contact may be progressed.
- Both parents will benefit from attending the Planning Together for Children course (previously SPIP).
- There is also the Co-Parent Hub, this provides clear information on how to effectively co-parent and manage child arrangements, and the tools to support the parents negotiate child arrangements, sustain effective co-parenting relationships and reduce parental conflict. This is a free service and is accessed via: Parenting together – Cafcass – Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

A copy of this letter has been sent to the parties.

Letter completed and signed by
