

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School



A Brief Guide to Safeguarding for Parents and Carers

Introduction

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We will endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We will be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and will follow our procedures to ensure that the children receive effective support, protection and justice.

This booklet will provide information about how we meet our safeguarding and child protection responsibilities. We have also included some tips to help you to keep your child safe.

**Our Head Teacher and Designated Person for Safeguarding is Anne Bullerwell
Our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Lucy Clarke (Deputy Headteacher) and Carolyn Ferguson (Assistant Headteacher)**

All DSL can be contacted via the school office on (0191) 2860129 or via email at:

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Reporting Concerns

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OR WELFARE OF YOUR CHILD, OR A CHILD YOU KNOW, YOU SHOULD ACT WITHOUT DELAY

If you have a serious concern about the safety or welfare of your child or another pupil then you should discuss your concern with the Head Teacher or the Deputy. This may then lead to an investigation being carried out in line with the school's **Safeguarding Policy**.

More minor concerns or complaints can usually be resolved by your child's class teacher.

Many people worry that their suspicions might be wrong, or that they will be interfering unnecessarily. If you wish, you can telephone for advice without identifying the child. If the conversation confirms that you are right to be concerned you can then give the child's details. You will be asked for your name and address, although external agencies will take anonymous calls if you really do not want to say who you are.

Remember it is always better to be safe than sorry if you have a genuine concern about a child.

The school has a **Complaints Procedure** which sets out how we aim to resolve concerns. A copy of this is available through the website or from the school office.

In addition to reporting concerns to staff in school you can report them to the following external agencies:

Children's Social Care

Tel: 0191 277 2500

Police

Tel: 0345 604 3043

Out-of-hours Duty Team

Tel: 0191 232 8520

NSPCC child protection helpline

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Internet and mobile phone safety

Mobile phones and computers are a part of everyday life for many children and young people. Used correctly they are an exciting source of communication, fun and educational but used incorrectly, or in the wrong hands, they can be threatening and dangerous.

The risks include:

- Cyber-bullying, where hurtful texts or emails are sent to children.
- Children accidentally or deliberately accessing violent or sexually explicit websites, either on a computer or a mobile phone.
- Paedophiles talking to children by mobile phones or online and enticing them to engage in sexual conversations, photographs, video or actual meetings.
- Children being subject to radicalisation or being drawn into terrorism/extremist activity.

Children and Young people are excited and engaged by all types of technology and you should encourage your child to use them safely. They also need to learn how to manage risks as they will have to all through their lives. Younger children will be much easier to supervise and you will decide if and when they should begin to use these technologies.

Here are some tips to help you to manage the risks:

- Try to put the computer in a family room where it will be easier for you to supervise your child's online activity.
- Ensure that your child knows they should never give their full name, address and contact details to people they chat to on the internet.
- Gently explain that some people they talk to on the internet may not be who they say they are and might say or do unpleasant or hurtful things.
- Investigate whether the 'parental controls' available from some internet service providers like TalkTalk, BT or Virgin Media will be helpful and consider installing software that can filter out inappropriate material.
- Talk to your child about their internet use. Ask them which sites they enjoy most, and why. Show you are interested, while understanding their need for some privacy.
- Impress on your child that they can talk to you if they are worried about something that has happened during their internet use, as you would for anything else.
- Make it very clear that your child must never arrange to meet someone they have chatted to online without your permission. Their new 'friend' might well be a local young person or similar age, but they might not.

Here are some useful links that will provide appropriate information to help you in guiding your children:

Helping Children Stay Safe Online

You may be alerted to question your child's online activity if they are:

- Spending more and more time on the internet.
- Being secretive – reluctant to talk about their internet activity, closing the screen page when you are close by.
- Spending less time with the family, or giving up previous hobbies and interests.
- Losing interest in their schoolwork, regularly failing to complete homework.
- Starting to talk about 'new friends' that you have not met and who do not visit your home.
- Overly possessive of their mobile phone or computer – perhaps overreacting if someone picks it up or asks to borrow it.
- Showing fear or discomfort when their phone rings, or quickly turning it off without answering.
- Undergoing a change in personality that you cannot attribute to any obvious cause.

Remember that none of these signs prove that your child is at risk in any way, but if you notice anything that confuses or worries you try talking things over with them. They may well tell you to stop fussing. They may be laid back.

In any case, think about their demeanour and attitude as well as what they say.

E safety Policy

Child abuse and what to look for

No parent wants to think about the possibility of their child becoming a victim of abuse, and most children are never abused. Even so, it is important for parents to be aware of the possibility and to know that help is available if the unthinkable does happen.

Although there is always a lot of media focus on 'stranger danger', the abduction of children is rare and the threat from strangers is quite small. You should still ensure that your child knows the rules about keeping safe when they are out alone.

Most children know their abusers. They may be family members or friends of family, someone who works with the child or someone who lives in the community.

There are four types of abuse: physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.

There are many signs or indications that a child might be suffering abuse. There may be injuries but it is more likely that you will notice some change in your child's behaviour.

If you notice anything that concerns you, talk to your child to see if you can find out what is happening. Remember that, if your child is being harmed, she or he may be too frightened to tell you. If your child becomes distressed or you are not happy with the explanations, you could talk to an adult you trust or call a helpline or children's social care serviced. Our designated person at school will also try to help.

Some signs to look for are:

- Bruises or other injuries.
- A change in behaviour – from quiet to loud or from happy-go-lucky to withdrawn.
- Pain or discomfort.
- Fear of a particular person, or a reluctance to be alone with them.
- Secrecy around a relationship with a particular person.
- Reluctance to discuss where they go, or who they are with.
- Sexual talk or knowledge beyond their years.
- Being watchful, or always on edge.
- Losing interest in their appearance, hobbies or family life.
- Alcohol or drug taking.
- Having money and refusing to say where it has come from.
- Wetting the bed.
- Becoming clingy.

You will find more useful information in the school's [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#).

If your child is being bullied

We define bullying as behaviour that is deliberate, repeated more than once and is designed to be hurtful. Bullies tend to pick on children who they think are unable to defend themselves. Bullying is not only about hitting or fighting. It also includes name calling, threats, taking belongings, intimidating and making unkind or abusive remarks. Children may try to hide the fact they are being bullied because they are afraid or ashamed. Signs to look out for include:

- A change in behaviour
- Coming home with torn clothing
- 'Lost' dinner money or asking for extra money
- Trying to avoid going to school
- Complaining regularly of headaches or stomach aches
- Having unexplained cuts and bruises
- Playing truant

We have anti-bullying procedures that help us to identify and deal with any case of bullying in school, but bullying does not only take place in school, it can also happen in the home or in the community.

Bullying can be serious and cause a lot of distress. If your child tells you that they are being bullied in school, ask for their permission for you to tell us. They may not have told us themselves because they are afraid that the bully will find out and the bullying will get worse. Try to help them to understand that the bullying will not stop while it is kept secret. As soon as we know it is happening we will follow our [Anti-bullying Policy](#) procedures to try to stop it.

It is also distressing to suspect that your child might be bullying other children. Our anti-bullying procedure include trying to support children who bully to change their behaviour, so please talk to us if you think your child needs some help.

What we will do if we have concern about your child

If we are concerned that your child may be at risk of abuse or neglect we must follow the procedures in our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.

The procedures have been written to protect all pupils. They comply with our statutory responsibilities and are designed to support pupils, families and staff. The procedures are based on the principle that the welfare of the child is the most important consideration.

In almost all circumstances, we will talk to you about our concerns and we will also tell you if we feel we must refer our concerns to children's social care. We will ask your consent to make a referral, but in some circumstances we may need to make the referral against your wishes. We will only do this if we genuinely believe that this is the best way to protect your child, and the fact that you did not consent to the referral will be recorded.

If we think that talking to you first might in some way increase the risk to your child, we will report our concerns to children's social care and take advice from them. We will normally tell you that a referral is being made and we will record the reasons why we decided to follow this course of action.

All child protection records are kept separate from your child's general school file. Records are stored in a locked cabinet or drawer, and if stored on computer they are password-protected. The only staff who have access to the records are those who need to know about the concern in order to protect and support your child.

You can ask to see what information is held on your child, and we will normally agree to this, but if we are unsure we will first seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer or Children's Social Care.

Child protection is a very sensitive issue and it raises many questions and a range of strong emotions. We will do everything we can to support our pupils and you can be assured that any action we take will be in the best interest of your child.

If you would like to discuss any of the content of this guide, please make an appointment to speak to the Head Teacher via the school office: 0191 2860129.

ALL OF THE DOCUMENTS IN RED ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR SCHOOL WEBSITE.