

**Sandfields Primary School**

**Safeguarding Information for Parents/Carers**

***Introduction***

Our school recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and we follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support and protection.

This leaflet tells you about how we meet our safeguarding and child protection responsibilities. We have also included some tips to help you to keep your child safe. If you have any questions about this information, or if you would like to see our Safeguarding Policy or Child Protection Policy then please look on our website.

How do we keep our pupils safe?

* We have a Safeguarding Policy and a Child Protection Policy which are reviewed annually.
* We have other safeguarding policies such as Cyber-bullying and E-Safety. (Available on our website or ask in the school office).
* We check the suitability of all our staff to work with children
* We encourage pupils to tell us if something is wrong
* We adhere to health and safety regulations
* All of our staff are trained to recognise and respond to child welfare concerns
* We work in partnership with parents and carers
* We share information with appropriate agencies if we have concerns
* We manage and support our staff.

***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 indicators 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 services. Our designated person at school (Mrs S Davies or Mrs H Bird) will also try to help.

Some signs to look for are:

* bruises or other injuries
* a change in behaviour
* 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 Child Protection Policy.

***What we will do if we have a 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 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 Social Services. 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 Social Services 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 cupboard, 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 concerns in order to protect and support your child.

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 interests of your child.

***Team Around the Family***

Sometimes we feel that families need some additional support at certain times in their lives. This may be for a variety of reasons such as parental support in coping/managing a child’s behaviour, support with routines/boundaries in the home or support for the parent if they are going through a difficult time in their lives. We may offer to do a referral to Team Around The Family (TAF) which is a part of Social Services. TAF is a way of finding out what extra support your family may need and how best to provide it. They provide a service to families who are likely to need help from two or more agencies (e.g. schools, [health services](https://www.npt.gov.uk/1063), [housing](https://www.npt.gov.uk/1201) etc.) TAF brings everyone together with your family to identify any needs, and how best to help your family use its strengths to meet these needs. A referral to TAF is only made if we have your consent.

***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 education 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 phone or online and enticing them to engage in sexual conversations, photographs, video or actual meetings.

In most cases it is not practical to simply ban your child from using mobiles and computers as they may well try to find a way of using them, perhaps at a friend’s house or in an internet café. They also need to learn how to manage the risks. 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 will be helpful.
* 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.
* Ensure your child understands that they can talk to you if they are worried about something that has happened during their internet use.
* 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 of similar age, but they might not.

**For further advice and information visit:**

Internet Watch Foundation: [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre: [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)

Stop It Now! [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

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 interfering or they may be laid back. In any case, think about their demeanour and attitude as well as what they say. If you are still concerned contact one of the helping agencies listed in this booklet or speak to Mrs S Davies or Mrs H Bird in school.

***Bullying***

**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 but you might notice some signs, for example your child might:

* change their behaviour
* come home with torn clothing
* try to avoid going to school
* complain regularly of headaches or stomach aches
* have 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 procedures to try to stop it.

It is also distressing to suspect that your child might be bullying other children. Our anti-bullying procedures include trying to support children who bully to change their behaviour, so please talk to us if you think your child needs some help. There is a copy of our Anti-Bullying Policy on our school website.

**Safeguarding Leads in School**

Headteacher/ Designated Child Protection Officer: Mrs. S. Davies

Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer: Mrs. H. Bird

Designated Child Protection Governor: Mrs. S. Chaves

Designated LAC Governor: Mrs. S. Chaves

We hope you find this leaflet informative. If you would like to discuss any safeguarding issues or if you have any questions then please contact Mrs. S. Davies or Mrs. H. Bird in school.

