



# **Safeguarding, Behaviour & Safety for Parents**

**Information Booklet**

**January 2017**

'Our school recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. 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.'

We have put together this booklet to give you some 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 Executive Headteacher is**

Mr G. Wallis-Clarke

Mr G. Wallis-Clarke

Telephone 0191 2810000

**Our School Business Manager is**

Mrs W. Marr

**Our Safeguarding lead person is**

Mr D. Martin (Head of School)

Telephone 0191 2810000

Telephone 0191 2810000

Email [office@westjesmondprimary.org.uk](mailto:office@westjesmondprimary.org.uk)

Parents can also contact Mrs Rebecca McVittie (Assistant Head Teacher / Deputy Safeguarding Lead), in relation to safeguarding issues.

If you have any questions about this booklet, or if you would like to see our child protection policy please contact Mr Dominic Martin

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

YOU CAN ASK FOR ADVICE, OR REPORT YOUR CONCERN TO:

Children, Social Care

Police

Tel: 0191 2772500

Tel: 03456043043

Out-of-hours duty team

NSPCC child protection helpline

Tel: 0191 2328520

Tel: 0808 800 5000

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 too, but the agencies will take anonymous calls, so if you really do not want to say who you are, you do not have to. Remember, it is always better to be safe than sorry.

## Complaints procedure

There may be an occasion when you need to tell us that something has gone wrong.

If you have a serious concern about the safety or welfare of your child or another pupil it may be dealt with under our child protection procedures. All other complaints, including those that may point to poor practice by a member of staff, will be dealt with firstly through the complaints procedure.

You should take any **serious concerns** about the behaviour of a staff member directly to the Head of School / Executive Headteacher. Examples of serious concerns include those involving violence, anything of a sexual nature or persistent bullying or humiliation.

Otherwise, the complaints procedure has three stages.

### Stage one

You may firstly speak to the member of staff concerned in your complaint. For example, your child may have told you that she has been upset by Mrs X shouting at her. If you are able to telephone, or come into school (preferably at the end of the day) and speak to Mrs X, you may be able to resolve your worries. If speaking to the staff member does not resolve the issue, or if you do not want to speak to the staff member directly, you should then move to stage two.

### Stage two

You should now discuss your complaint with the Head of School / Executive Headteacher. You can do this by telephone, letter, or arrange to meet at school. The Head of School / Executive Headteacher may need to make enquiries into your concern, including speaking with any people involved. She or he may also ask you to record your complaint on the schools

Complaints form. You will want the Head of School / Executive Headteacher to find out what has happened, and the time this takes will depend on a number of things. The Head of School / Executive Headteacher will agree with you the date by which she or he will contact you again. At this second contact, the Head of School / Executive Headteacher will either tell you that enquiries are continuing, or report that enquiries are complete and offer a suggested resolution. Possible resolutions include:

- There was no evidence to support the complaint
- The complaint is upheld and:
  - An explanation will be offered
  - An apology will be offered
  - The staff member will undertake some training to rectify any deficit
  - School procedures will be amended.

### Stage three

If you feel that the resolution offered in stage two is inadequate, you may forward your complaint to the Chair of Governors. Provided the complaint is within the remit of the governing body, a complaints panel will meet and you will be invited to attend. The panel will listen to your complaint and your reasons for rejecting the previous resolutions. The panel can then either dismiss the complaint, or uphold the complaint, in full or in part, and offer some resolutions. You will be given a date by which a decision will be taken and you will be notified in writing. The letter should be in your preferred language.

## **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-bulling, 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.

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 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 of similar age, but they might not.
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### **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 fussing. 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.

## **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 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 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. You can look at the policy in school, or receive a copy to take home. Please just ask the secretary.

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

- Change their behaviour
- Come home with torn clothing
- 'lose' their dinner money, or ask for extra money
- Try to avoid going to school
- Complain regularly of headaches or stomach aches
- Have unexplained cuts and bruises
- Play 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 (outlined in detail in the Behaviour Policy / Antibullying Policy) trying to support children who bully to change their behaviour, so please talk to us if you think your child needs some help.

## Attendance

As a school, attendance is monitored closely, on a weekly basis by Mrs Rebecca McVittie Assistant Headteacher and our Attendance Officer Ms Helen Jordan (contact details for Helen can be found on the school website). Attendance falling below 95% is considered a cause for concern.

In the event of concerns over attendance (attendance falling below 95% is considered a cause for concern), Helen will contact parents directly via telephone to discuss absence and how school can further support parents and children. At present the school does not authorize absence from school unless in **exceptional circumstances**. The Headteacher will decide what might constitute as **exceptional circumstances**.

Such circumstances might include the following:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill;
- There has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate period of absence might help the child concerned better deal with the situation.

Holidays taken during term time, without prior permission from school, can result in legal sanctions for irregular attendance being taken against you. These legal sanctions are set out as amendments to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments will again come into force from 1st September 2013. The 2007 regulations set out the procedure for issuing penalty notices (a £60 fine payable within 21 days or £120 within 28 days) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school.

Where attendance or lateness persists over a period of time, despite intervention by school, we may consider asking parents to complete a 'parenting contract', in which parents and school make a renewed commitment to improve attendance or lateness.

In addition, where a period of unauthorized absence, has come to the school's attention we can ask our attendance officer to legally monitor attendance in order to promote improvement.

If your child is going to be absent, please:

- Contact the school on the first morning and keep the school up to date if it turns out to be a longer absence.
- Send a signed and dated note with the reason for the absence when your child returns to school.
- If your child recovers from illness before the end of the week, send them back to school even if it's only for one day - every day counts.
- If there is a problem, we are always happy to support you and your child, so please do contact us as soon as possible.

### **Health and Safety**

If your child is ill or injured during school they will be sent to the School Medical room to be cared for by one of our qualified First Aiders; examined and, where appropriate administered treatment. Unless an accident has occurred that requires treatment in situ. All accidents, incidents, ailments and treatment are reported in the appropriate report book/form available from the school office. If your child needs help with toileting, or accidentally wets or soils him/herself, or is sick while at school they will be changed, or allowed to change themselves, with sensitivity to the child's need for privacy and be treated with respect. (Further details can be found in the school's 'Intimate Care Policy'.

To make sure that all children are familiar with fire safety the Head of School / Executive Headteacher will ensure that fire drills are carried out each term, with records kept and that a fire evacuation plan is in place.

To ensure that pupils are safe during field trips or visits; all visits and trips away from the school site must have a specific risk assessment which will be submitted to the Head of School / Executive Headteacher at least two weeks prior to the visit. The Head of School / Executive Headteacher will ensure that the guidance contained in 'Safety in Educational Visits and School Journeys' is followed. Suitable supervision will be organised by the Head of School / Executive Headteacher for all school activities.