

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



An Introduction to Safeguarding Parents/Carers Booklet

'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 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 Designated Members of Staff for Child Protection are:

Mrs Thomas (Headteacher)

Miss Clarke (SENCO)

If you have any questions about this leaflet please contact the Head teacher. The school's Safeguarding Policy Incorporating Child Protection is available on the school website. Both of the above can be contacted at school – **telephone number. 01709 361502**
www.stmarysherringthorpe.co.uk

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

Child Abuse and what to look for:

No parent or carer 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.

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 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.

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- A change in behaviour – from quiet to loud, or from happy-go-lucky to withdrawn.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.
- 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.

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 agreed safeguarding procedures. The procedures have been written to protect all students. 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. 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.

All child protection records are kept separate from your child's general school file. The only members of 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.

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 e-mails are sent to children, or inappropriate messages left on social networking sites.
- 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.

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.
- Explain that some people they talk to on the internet may not be who they say they are.
- Investigate whether the 'parental controls' available from some internet service providers will be helpful.
- Install software that can filter out inappropriate material.
- Impress on your child 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.

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.
- Being overly possessive of their mobile phone or computer – perhaps over-reacting 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.

If you still have concerns you could contact one of the agencies listed below:

National Child Protection Agencies

NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000 - <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Childline: 0800 1111 – <http://www.childline.org.uk/>

Kidscape: 08451 205 204 - www.kidscape.org.uk

National Mental Health Agencies

Young Minds: 0808 802 5544 - www.youngminds.org.uk

Mental Health Foundation: 020 7803 1100 - www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mind: 0845 766 0163 - www.mind.org.uk

Parents’/Carers Support Agencies

ParentlinePlus: 0808 800 2222 - www.parentlineplus.org.uk

National Internet Safety Agencies

ChildNet International: www.childnet.com

Child Exploitation and Online Protection: 0870 000 3344 - www.ceop.gov.uk

Internet Watch Foundation - www.iwf.org.uk

Think U Know: 0870 000 3344 - www.thinkuknow.co.uk