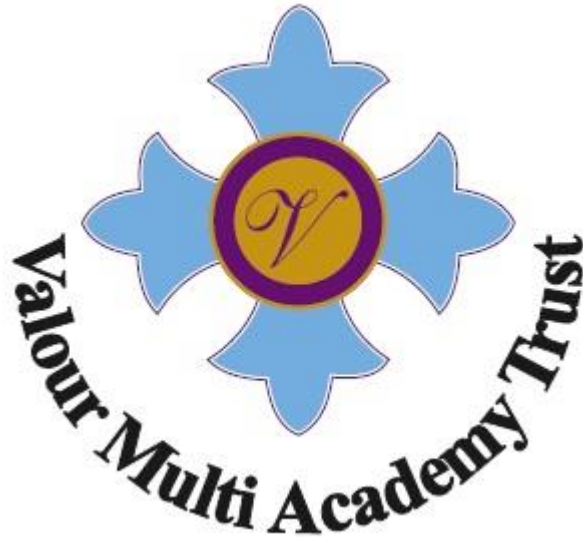




Safeguarding for Parents/Carers

September 2024

Agreed by Valour Trustees October 2nd 2024, review October 2025

Information Booklet

Introductory page

'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 policy 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 CEO is

Dame Nicola Stephenson

Telephone 0191 2678113

Our designated person for child protection is

Mrs Jess Eatock

Our school Business Manager is

Mrs Sarah Bewley

Telephone 0191 2678113

Our deputy designated persons are

Dame Nicola Stephenson / Mrs Kate Telfer/

Mrs J Manning/ Mrs Sharron Macdonald/Ms K Farnham

Telephone 0191 2678113

Email admin@beechhill.newcastle.sch.uk

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 tel: 0191 2787878

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.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or Head Teacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complainants should not approach individual Trustees to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the Head Teacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Head Teacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Head Teacher should be addressed to Dame Stephenson (the CEO), via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the CEO, any individual trustee or the whole trustee board should be addressed to Karen Miller (the Clerk to the trust board) via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included in the Complaints Policy Procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head Teacher or CEO, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply such as safeguarding issues.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

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.

For further advice and information visit:

Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre: www.ceop.gov.uk

Stop It Now! 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 above.

Ten tips to keeping your temper

Children and young people can be infuriating sometimes. They need to be taught the right way to behave and sometimes they test parents/carers to the limit. The trouble is, if we lose our temper too often they may become frightened – or they may realise they have found just how to wind us up. When you feel you are losing your temper or are ready to shout or lash out, try these tips to calm down. They may defuse the situation and give you time to consider how best to handle it.

- Take some deep breaths
- Count to 10
- Close your eyes for a moment, to decide what to say
- Depending on the age of your child, tell them calmly but firmly to go to their room
- Depending on the age of your child, leave the room and get some fresh air
- Turn on some music – nothing too loud
- Sit down
- Hug a pillow
- If another adult is present, hand over to them
- Phone a friend

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/carers 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, sexual 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, 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 and Safeguarding in Schools 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 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 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.

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 school office team.

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. They 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.

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 seek advice from the local authority designated officer or children's social care first.

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