



10 November 2017

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

Keeping your child safe is an absolute priority for everyone within The Bewdley School community. My letter this week focuses on bullying, what the school does if we have a safeguarding concern and sources of support and information for parents.

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
- '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 the 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. You will find some useful sources of information and support at the end of this article.

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 Safeguarding/ child protection policy. You can look at the policy on the school website or come into school and see a copy. 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 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.

Sources of support and information:

Bullying – www.bullying.co.uk; www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Child protection – national NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

Child Law Advice Line: 08088 020 008

Childline: 0800 1111

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

Mental health – national 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

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

Sexual harm and sexually harmful behaviour – national Stop It Now! 0808 1000 900

www.aimproject.org.uk Internet safety – national

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

Online safety - <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/becybersmart2#>

Thank you for taking the time to read the Safeguarding Bulletin. As always, should you have any questions, queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Best wishes,



Mr D Chauhan – Deputy Headteacher