



**Denbigh Community Primary School**



**Parents Guide to Child Protection and Safeguarding**  
**'It's everybody's business!'**

October 2012

## Introduction

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.

If you have any questions about this booklet, or if you would like to see our Child Protection Policy please contact the school.

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

Key Information and contact details.	
Designated Child Protection person Dr L Guthrie (Headteacher)	0191 2622509
Deputy designated person for child protection Mrs Jackie Young, Learning Mentor	0191 2622509
<b>First Call (North Tyneside Council)</b>  First Call is the first point of contact for all families, children and professionals. First Call is a duty team who offer information, support and services. They signpost to other relevant agencies and undertake initial assessment.	First Call Team North Tyneside Council Quadrant West (First Floor) Silverlink North Cobalt Business Park North Tyneside NE27 0BY Tel: (0191) 643 7979 Tel: 0300 123 0812 (Out of Hours) Fax: (0191) 643 2409 Email: <a href="mailto:first.call@northtyneside.gov.uk">first.call@northtyneside.gov.uk</a>
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ( <b>NSPCC</b> )	0808 800 5000
Child Law Advice line	08088 020 008
Parentline Plus	0808 800 222 <a href="http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk">www.parentlineplus.org.uk</a>
<b>Internet safety</b> Childnet International	<a href="http://www.childnet.com">www.childnet.com</a>
Child Exploitation & Online protection	0870 000 3344 <a href="http://www.ceop.gov.uk">www.ceop.gov.uk</a>
Internet Watch Foundation	<a href="http://www.iwf.org.uk">www.iwf.org.uk</a>
<b>Northumbria Police</b>	999

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 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. If you are able to telephone, or come into school (preferably at the end of the day) and speak to that member of staff, 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 headteacher. You can do this by telephone, letter, or arrange to meet at school. The headteacher may need to make enquiries into your concern, including speaking with any people involved. He may also ask you to record your complaint on the school's complaints form. You will want the headteacher to find out what has happened, and the time this takes will depend on a number of things. The headteacher will agree with you the date by which she or he will contact you again. At this second contact, the 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.

This is the final stage of the school-based complaints procedure.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling or the outcome of your complaint you have the right to contact the local authority or an external agency.

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.

It probably 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.
- 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.

**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.
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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.

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
- having money and refusing to say where it has come from
- wetting the bed
- becoming clingy

Contact details of people who may offer support are in the 'key contacts' section of this booklet.

## 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 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 concerns about a 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 we think that talking to you first might in some way increase the risk to your child, we will report our concerns to First Call 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.

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.

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

It is a shocking and distressing fact that some children are abused by adults. In 2009 there were over 34,000 known cases of children being abused including Neglect, Physical, Emotional and Sexual abuse and where a Child Protection plan had to be put in place.

The statistics available from the NSPCC and Ofsted etc are quite shocking. For example, In the 17-month period to the end of August 2008 local authorities in England notified Ofsted of 424 serious incidents involving the deaths of 282 children. This equates to 199 annually, or almost four children each week. Since publication of this report, Ofsted has clarified that 210 of these deaths, i.e. three each week, were actually attributable to abuse or neglect. The NSPCC believes that one to two children die each week due to neglect or abuse. Regardless of which agency is correct, the statistics are shameful in a modern society. As long as such statistics exist, we have a duty, as teachers, parents and carers to look out for all children. That is why, if you have any concern, you should report it or seek advice.

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.

### **At Denbigh Community Primary School we help to keep pupils safe by:**

- having an up to date Child Protection Policy
- having other safeguarding policies, such as anti-bullying and internet safety
- checking the suitability of all our staff to work with children
- encouraging pupils to tell us if something is wrong
- adhering to health and safety regulations
- training all our staff to recognise and respond to child welfare concerns
- appointing a designated person who has additional training in child protection
- working in partnership with parents and carers
- sharing information with appropriate agencies if we have concerns
- managing and supporting our staff team