

Important Information for Parents and Carers

Safeguarding Children in Education

At Alpington & Bergh Apton Church of England VA Primary School we are committed to supporting all of our children to do well. We will do everything we can to ensure our children are safeguarded and protected from harm.

What does safeguarding mean?

Every child has the right to be safe from harm and danger. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure every child is free from fear and able to learn and develop in safe, secure environments.

Why am I being given this information?

All parents and carers who join our school will be given this leaflet. Your child might be new to our school and this explains what we must do if we are worried about a child or young person. We might also be giving you this leaflet because we have made a referral to Children's Services and it will explain what will happen next.

What is child abuse?

A child is abused when a parent, carer, other family member or another adult known to the child deliberately causes harm, neglects or fails to protect their child from harm. Harm may be physical, sexual, emotional or may take the form of neglect.

Why would we make a referral to Children's Services?

All schools have a duty to refer cases of suspected child abuse to Children's Services. If someone at our school sees an unusual or unexplained injury or mark, if your child has said something worrying to us, perhaps someone has reported something your child has said or if their behaviour is particularly out of the ordinary, we are required to make a referral.

Children's Services are also able to help children and their families if a referral has been made and abuse is not evident but there are concerns that mean additional support might be needed.

Every school is required to help Children's Services with their assessments but **must not** conduct any investigations themselves. This can only be done by social workers and/or police officers.

We have made a referral but you don't agree with it ...

If we think your child has possibly been abused we don't have to seek your agreement for the referral to be made. However, it is always better for your child if we can work together. We will, wherever possible, discuss the referral with you and also let you know it has been made.

What will happen next?

When a referral is made an experienced and qualified social work manager will read the information and decide what needs to happen next. They will be assisted by other agencies that you know, for example, school nurse, GP, health visitor or school.

After an assessment has been completed a meeting called a child protection conference might be held - you will be invited to this. This meeting will only be called if the assessment shows that there is a likelihood that child abuse has or is taking place.

If the assessment does not show this you will be told. Children's Services may decide that they can still provide a service or will know of other agencies in your area that will be able to offer you some support.

You may feel angry, upset or worried because we have made a referral. Please try to understand that every member of staff has a responsibility to act in the best interests of all of our children all of the time and are not allowed to take any risks if a child's safety is of concern.

Will my child be taken away?

It is very unusual for children to be taken away from their parents or carers. A child will only be removed if there is absolutely no other way of keeping them safe. The Children Act says everything possible must be done to help parents look after their children at home.

Why are we involved with safeguarding?

The Children Act 1989 requires everyone working with children to inform Children's Services about any child thought to be in need of support or at risk of harm. The Education Act 2002 requires all schools to have arrangements to safeguard the children.

We have procedures in place to do this and a policy that all staff, volunteers and regular visitors must work to. You can also request a copy of this from the school office or alternatively log on to our school website www.alpington.norfolk.sch.uk where you will be able to access our safeguarding policies.

We also have to have at least two members of staff whose job it is to be responsible for all aspects of safeguarding in our school. They are the Headteacher, Teresa Osborne and Assistant Headteacher, Michael Stowers. We also have a named governor for safeguarding, Rev. Chris Ellis, who can be contacted via the school office.

How you can work in partnership with us.....

Children will get the most out of their education when we all work together on every issue. This means that both school and home have to have good communication links. Please let us know about anything that might affect your child, we might be able to help. Let us know if your child has a medical condition or has had an accident. Also, please let us know if your child will not be coming into school by ringing us on the first day they are absent. If you move house or out of the area and don't need your place at our school please let us know this too.

What can you expect from us?

- A safe environment for your child to learn that complies with safeguarding in education legislation and guidance.
- We will take good care of your child whilst they are with us. We will talk to you about anything we see that we are worried about.
- We will keep accurate up to date records.
- If your child transfers to another school we will share important information with them that will help to support your child's move.
- We will contact you if your child is absent and you haven't let us know why.
- We will respond promptly to any problem you tell us about.
- Our staff will offer support and assistance when needed.

For updated information on safeguarding children in Norfolk visit www.lscb.norfolk.gov.uk