

Parents'/Carers' Booklet

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If you have any questions about this leaflet or if you would like to see our Child Protection Policy please contact Helen Alderson.

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 are 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 a 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 harmed, s/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, call a helpline for children's social services (01709) 336080.

Some signs to look for are:

- Bruises or other injuries.
- A change in behaviour from quiet to loud, or from happy to withdrawn.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. These procedures have been written to protect all students. They comply with our statutory responsibilities and are designed to support students, 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

- Spending more and more time on the internet.
- Being secretive or 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 e-reader or 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. We have also designed a website for parents/students with helpful links:

<http://aware.wickersley.net/>

You can contact us with any safeguarding concerns by emailing safeguarding@wickersley.net

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 1114 <http://www.childline.org.uk/>

Kidscape 020 7730 3300 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

Rotherham and Barnsley Mind 0114 26 211188 w 01226 211188

Internet Watch Foundation www.iwf.org.uk

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