



# Oxenhope Church of England Primary School

## **Reporting Concerns About a Child** **Procedures – June 2019**



### **If you are concerned about the safety of a child, act!**

Our Named Persons for Child Protection are (Head of School), Alice Jones and Gillian Dyson (Pastoral Manager), Caroline Auty (Class Teacher) and Hannah Inman (Explorers Club Leader)

#### Useful phone numbers:

School – 01535 642271

Social Services Initial Contact Point 01274 437500

NSPCC – 0808 800 5000

West Yorkshire Police – 101 or 999

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies**

Created By:	Date:	Next Review Date:
A Jones	June 2019	June 2021

We are a community where each person is valued by God. We nurture confidence, delight and discipline in seeking the skills needed to shape life well.

Life in all its fullness; John Chapter 10 v 10.

At Oxenhope CE Primary School, we believe in a broad, balanced and creative curriculum, which provides *each child* with a chance to flourish and achieve their potential by becoming successful, life-long learners who are able to enjoy life in all its fullness. Our Christian ethos, character and values pervade Oxenhope CE Primary ensuring the exceptional personal development and academic achievement of the whole child, as well as the overall 'well-being' of the school community. The school is wholehearted in its commitment, putting faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum.

**Christian beliefs and practices that underpin this policy**

<p><b>Love / Compassion</b></p> 	<p>'Love your neighbour as yourself' Luke 10 v 27 Just like Jesus was 'moved with compassion' we want to instil the children of Oxenhope with selfless kindness towards others. The ultimate aim is to do good to other people, whoever they may be.</p>
<p><b>Service / Community</b></p> 	<p>'Serve one another in love' Galatians 5 v14 At Oxenhope we actively seek opportunities to work together to help others. As even Jesus washed the disciple's feet we can learn from his example and seek to do good where we can, both locally and globally.</p>
<p><b>Wisdom</b></p> 	<p>'Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding.' Proverbs 3 v 13 As the children at Oxenhope are faced with situations and dilemmas, we endeavour to teach and direct them to make wise choices which will develop their characters and shape their lives. Wisdom is rooted in a proper reverence for God, the source of all life and values.</p>
<p><b>Forgiveness</b></p> 	<p>'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us.' Luke 11 v 4 These are the words we quote in our school prayer. As we appreciate how much we have been forgiven, we can forgive others.</p>
<p><b>Courage</b></p> 	<p>"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1 v 9 It is important that the children go from Oxenhope with a determined strength that they can bravely overcome whatever challenges they are faced with.</p>
<p><b>Endurance / Hope</b></p> 	<p>'Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.' Romans 12 v 12 Jesus' followers are challenged to think of life like a race. However - NOT a short sprint but a marathon! The bible says that we are made stronger for the future every time we endure and refuse to give up. We teach our children to persevere and not give up hope.</p>
<p><b>Truth</b></p> 	<p>'Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ' Ephesians 4 v 15 We teach the children to be full of integrity and honesty, knowing the difference between right and wrong. If they have strong moral principles they will be the much needed light in this world. As Jesus said 'the truth will set you free.'</p>

All school staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns about a child's safety and to report any disclosures of abuse of a child. Details of how to do this should be outlined in the school's child protection policy and procedures. The process should also form part of child protection induction and refresher training.

## **Reporting concerns**

Any and every concern about a child's welfare or safety should be recorded and given to the school's designated safeguarding lead.

Staff should record the date and time of the observation, the details of the concern, noting anything that the child said or did, or any observation that gave the cause for concern. This should be signed and dated by the member of staff reporting the concern

## **Reporting disclosures**

All staff should be fully aware of their responsibility to report any disclosure as soon as possible to the designated safeguarding lead. The procedures for doing this should be given in the school's child protection policy.

When recording a disclosure, the following should be recorded:

- Child's name, date and time of the disclosure.
- A written account of the disclosure using as much of the child's own language as possible.
- Note the emotional state of the child.
- Record any visible signs but only what can be seen. Use a body map if that is easier than describing any visible sign in words.
- Sign and date the record.

## **Effective listening skills when responding to concerns and disclosures**

Disclosing abuse or talking about something that is worrying them can be difficult for some children. Staff in school are seen by many children as adults they can trust, who will take them seriously and who have their best interests at heart. The decision to talk to an adult about a concern is not usually one that is taken lightly and it will have taken courage for the child to decide to speak out. It could be a spontaneous decision to talk following an incident or something that has been on the child's mind for a while.

## **Overcoming obstacles to listening**

Perhaps the biggest barrier to effective listening is time. It is very unlikely that a child will speak about a problem at a time that is convenient to a busy member of the school staff, but such conversations need to take priority and should not be delayed.

Adults can be anxious about what a child is saying and what the appropriate response would be. Familiarity with the school's child protection policy and procedures will ensure that staff:

- know how to respond to a disclosure
- understand their responsibilities in listening carefully and providing a written record
- are clear that concerns must be passed to the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible
- understand that it is not their role to investigate.

## **Showing empathy**

Empathy is the ability of a person to understand the feelings of another person. Empathic listening helps to promote trust and confidence of the child by demonstrating a genuine desire to understand what is being said. In addition to following the points above it will be helpful to the child to:

- be attentive
- use friendly and approachable body language
- reflect back what the child has said
- give the child time. Do not rush them or be tempted to fill any silences
- keep own feelings about what is being said hidden
- give verbal and non-verbal encouragement (saying "I see" or nodding).

## **After the disclosure**

The child may need reassurance that they have done the right thing in sharing their concern and that they have been taken seriously. The child should be told what will happen next in general terms. Following a concern or a disclosure the adult needs to provide a written record of what has been said using as much of the child's own words as possible. The child's emotional state should also be noted. The record should be signed and dated and given as soon as possible to the designated safeguarding lead. The school may have an agreed format for recording concerns.

## **Support**

The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility for following up the disclosure and should let the member of staff who passed on the concern know what is happening, bearing in mind any issues about confidentiality.

It is upsetting to receive a disclosure and the school should have some support in place for staff. This could include reassurance from the designated safeguarding lead that the right response has been made and that the disclosure has been handled appropriately. Additional support can be available via professional networks and local and national helplines.

Written by Alice Jones

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