



# Oxenhope Church of England Primary School

## The role of school in protecting pupils from harm that is linked to culture, faith or beliefs



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

Our Named Persons for Child Protection are (Headteacher), 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 is designed to be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Created By:	Last reviewed:	Next Review Date:
A Jones	May 2020	May 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**

<b>Love / Compassion</b> 	'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.
<b>Service / Community</b> 	'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.
<b>Wisdom</b> 	'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.
<b>Forgiveness</b> 	'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.
<b>Courage</b> 	"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.
<b>Endurance / Hope</b> 	'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.
<b>Truth</b> 	'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.'

Staff in school are in a good position to recognise any potential signs that a child may be subject to abuse and to act quickly to help protect the child.

Protecting some pupils from abuse may require a better understanding of their families' faith, culture or belief to appreciate risk factors, recognise signs of abuse, and improve confidence in challenging practice which may be putting a child at risk of harm.

Some parent/s or carers may have a perspective on child rearing practices underpinned by culture or faith which are not in line with UK law and cultural norms, and they may put their child at risk of harm.

Not all practices related to culture, faith and beliefs are harmful, but there are some known practices involving children which are unsafe and in some cases against the law in the UK.

These include:

- branding a child as a witch
- breast ironing
- child trafficking
- cupping therapy
- female genital mutilation
- forced marriage,
- honour based violence,
- harsh forms of physical chastisements,
- scaring initiations,
- certain healing practices and ritual practices.

Practices such as these can cause emotional, psychological and physical harm and in the worst cases death.

Culture, faith, belief or tradition is no excuse for harming a child and is condemned by people of all communities. Child abuse is never acceptable wherever it occurs and whatever form it takes.

### **School ethos, policy and training**

Oxenhope C of E Primary has robust child protection policies and procedures in place that are read and understood by all members of staff.

The school also creates an ethos and culture that encourages children to speak to a member of staff if they are worried about anything. Displaying posters that advertise helplines for children such as ChildLine are also a good way of encouraging children to seek help if they have a problem.

Teachers are also encouraged to develop or enhance their cultural competency. This can be achieved by understanding the underlying principles of good child protection practice and applying them with knowledge and understanding of a student's specific circumstances relating to their family's culture and faith. All school staff attend child protection training to help them identify signs of abuse and act quickly.

**What are the schools' responsibilities?** The Children Act 1989 makes it clear that the child's welfare is paramount. The rights of the child must always be upheld before consideration of the rights (and traditional cultural and faith related practices) of adult family members and/or the child's community.

Since the Children Act 2004, there is a responsibility on professionals, voluntary organisations and faith communities to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Therefore, building trust and understanding between the school, parents and communities is important. Oxenhope also adheres to guidance on child protection set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

### **Preventative education**

Oxenhope invites faith and community leaders to lessons or assemblies to raise children's understanding about faith, culture and safeguarding. Specific cultures are not targeted in lessons, rather the general issue of children's rights which is covered in PSHE lessons and the importance of emotional and physical wellbeing which is also covered in PHSE lessons.

### **Response and action to take on suspicions or disclosures**

It must be stressed that being sensitive to the family's culture, faith and beliefs is important, but teachers need to be prepared to challenge views and actions which expose children to harm. Teachers should feel able to question the parent or carer's practice or interpretation of their faith or belief system if it impacts on the wellbeing of their students.

If a student reports that they fear for themselves because of the behaviour of a family member, ensure that they are listened to, follow the school's procedure for referrals and do not contact the pupil's parents/ carers if it is felt that this would put the pupil at risk of further harm.

Teachers should be familiar with the school's child protection procedures for referral and reporting, and follow these procedures where the student is found to be at risk or information becomes available that abuse has taken place.

### **Working with parents**

Families may be in need greater awareness and education about UK children's legislation, the role and responsibilities of local statutory services and their powers and duties towards children and their families. Schools can put them in touch with voluntary organisations that can offer family support, information and training to adults and children.

### **Schools can further support parents by:**

- challenging childcare practice which may be harmful and provide parents with information or referral to access further support
- being specific about what the law says about the welfare of the child which is backed up by school child protection guidance.
- providing a space for parents to engage with each other and to access information from professional services
- displaying information from community support organisations
- providing a space to deliver English language courses if the school has many parents from the same community who have language difficulty.