

John Wilkinson Primary School and Nursery



Children Reporting Concerns Guidance

This guidance been **shared with** the following professional associations and Trade Unions representing Teachers, Headteachers and Support Staff:

- National Union of Teachers
- National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers
- National Association of Headteachers
- Association of School and College Leaders
- Unison
- GMB

This guidance been **consulted on with** the following teams:

- Shropshire HR
- Education Access
- Education Improvement Service
- Children's Social Care

This guidance has been adopted by the governing body of John Wilkinson

On 8th November 2021

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Child Reporting Concerns Guidance

1. Introduction

Enabling children and young people to report concerns is an important part of safeguarding children to promote the welfare of children in education.

John Wilkinson Primary School and Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

There is no formal template for children to report concerns however this guidance is intended to ensure that school staff encourage the 'voice' of the child/ young person to be heard and that children and young people know who and where to go to in the School/ academy should they have any concerns that may affect their own or another young person's welfare. This may be something that has affected them in person or via social media or other technology:

- Sexual abuse
- Sexual harassment & Sexual Violence
- Peer on Peer abuse
- Sexting/ pornography
- Domestic abuse
- Smoking, alcohol or drugs
- Racism
- Bullying on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- Faith abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Gender based violence
- Extremist views
- Trafficking

(Further specific safeguarding issues can be located in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) guidance)

This guidance should be read by staff in conjunction with other KCSiE policies and procedures (Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Policy) and in accordance with the provisions for Personal, Social and Health & Economic (PSHE) curriculum to ensure that staff are very clear about what steps to take in the event that a child reports a concern to them that questions the child's welfare.

Staff and volunteers promoting this guidance to pupils should also be aware of the school's E-safety guidance issued to parents specifically for pupils and the school's guidance for safe use of mobile phones within an early years setting.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor and review the effectiveness of KCSiE policies and guidance and to be familiar with the DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and other guidance specifically for children reporting concerns about themselves or other pupils so they know how and to who they should report any concerns to.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that structures are in place to support the effective implementation of this procedure and that all pupils and staff are familiar with this procedure and that it is shared with and promoted to pupils.

3. Scope

This guidance should be promoted by all schools staff to all pupils in this school /academy under the age of 18 (or older in sixth forms).

4. Legislation & Guidance

The following legislation and guidance are relevant to this document:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children's Act 1989 & 2004
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (independent school standards) Regulations 2014
- The Education (non-maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011,
- Sexual Offences act 2003
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused. Advice for practitioners 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- West Midlands Child Safeguarding Procedures
- SSCP Childrens Threshold Guidance

5. Support

5.1 Internal Support

Pupils should be made aware of contacts for reporting concerns through normal teaching routes for curriculum and assemblies. Staff can also consider special themed weeks such as anti-bullying week to remind pupils about appropriate contacts to report concerns. Specific safeguarding issues may be explored in further detail with pupils in PSHE/RSHE lessons and the added reminder about who and where children can go to gain additional support.

An 'Asking for help' flowchart in appendix 1 can be used to promote how children can get help (you may wish to adapt this depending on the age of children you work with or add other examples that the school use). At John Wilkinson, we also use the following strategies/interventions to support with helping children to open up and talk:

School values assemblies
Anti bullying week activities and resources
Worry boxes/question boxes
Circle time

Following our school vision and particularly the safety message. This includes "Talk And Tell" a trusted adult your uncomfortable feelings or worries; "Your Body Belongs To You" where children are encouraged to follow the NSPCC PANTS rule. These are displayed around school and outside the Headteacher's office.

All staff and pupils should be made aware about who their Designated Lead is for Safeguarding (DSL). However, this guidance recommends that children are encouraged to go to whichever adult they feel comfortable talking to rather than just one or two people who are designated leads for safeguarding as they may not have a relationship with that person which may then make them less likely to open up and talk.

Disclosures can be a long and complex journey for a child. They may delay speaking out, waiting instead for someone to notice or something else to happen. They may share their experiences over a period of time. And, when they do disclose, they may not do so verbally or directly. And while it's essential that anyone working with children are able to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and act on their concerns, we must also ensure that children and young people are listened to and supported if and when they do speak out.

A child may make an allegation of peer abuse, familial abuse or abuse by a person in a position of trust. These following points are important to remember when receiving an allegation of abuse by a child/young person.

1. **Avoid denial.** A common reaction to a child's disclosure is denial. Respect the child by listening to what he/she has to say and taking what the child says seriously. Believe what the child is telling you.
2. **Provide a safe environment.** Make sure the setting is confidential and comfortable. Avoid communicating with shock, horror, or fear about anything said, even though what you are hearing is likely shocking and horrifying. The child may interpret your reaction as you being shocked and horrified by him or her and shut down. The child needs you to be confident and supportive. Speak slowly and maintain a calm demeanor. Tell the child he/she is doing the right thing and that you will do what you can to help them.
3. **Reassure the child.** Reassure the child that he/she did nothing wrong and that you believe him/her.
4. **Listen and don't make assumptions.** Listen more than you talk, and avoid advice giving or problem solving. Don't put words in the child's mouth or assume you know what he/she means or are going to say. Let the child use language they are comfortable with. Let the child set the pace, don't rush them.
5. **Do not interrogate.** Don't ask the child a lot of questions, especially leading questions, which means a question in which you provide a possible answer (examples: Did this or that happen? Were you at school? Did your uncle hit you on the leg?). This can be confusing for your child and he/she might shut down. Don't ask your child for details. This can make it harder for the child to tell you about the abuse.

Listen to the child, letting them explain what happened in his or her own words. Don't stop the child in the middle of the story to go get someone or do something else. **Limit questioning, some examples are:**

- What happened?
- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?
- Who did it?
- How do you know them? (If the relationship of the abuser is unclear.)

A useful model to remember during this time is T.E.D; T "tell me", E "explain to me" and D is "describe to me".

6. **Make no promises.** Don't tell the child that you won't tell anyone what they tell you. The child will have fears about what will happen next, so tell the child what you are going to do, what is going to happen next, and who else they will need to talk to. This will help the child feel some control over what happens next within the boundaries of the law.
7. **Document exact quotes.** It may be helpful to write down exact quotes of what the child said in case of the involvement of other parties, such child protective services.
8. **Be supportive, not judgmental.** Don't talk negatively. Even though the child may be disclosing terrible things that may have happened at the hands of a family member or friend, the child may still love that person and may only just be beginning to recognize that he/she was being abused. Reassure the child that he/she is not at fault and have done nothing wrong.

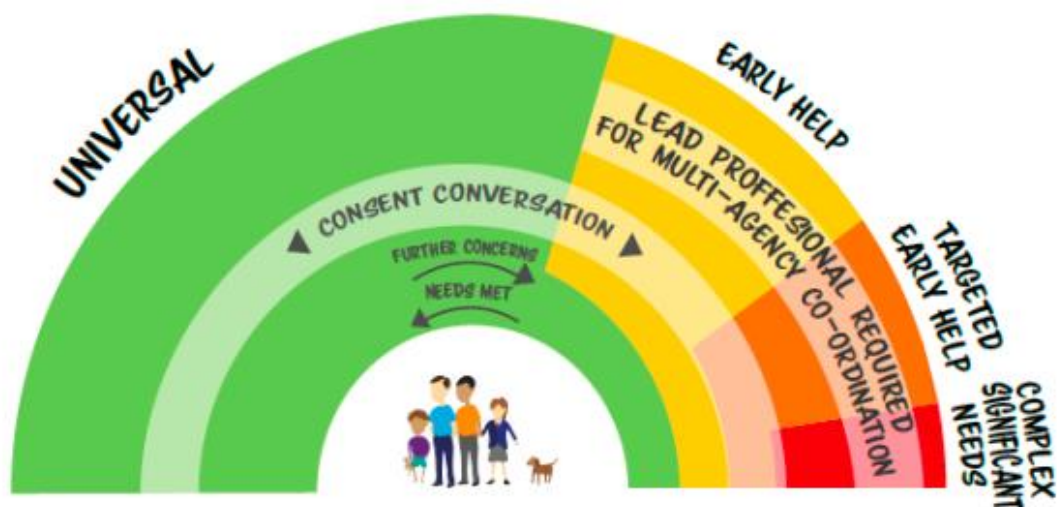
Don't ask questions that imply the child was at fault –

- Why didn't you tell me before?
- What were you doing there?
- Why didn't you stop it?
- What did you do to make this happen?
- Are you telling the truth

Follow-up and outcomes

Support could be within the school in the form of pastoral support, school counsellors and school nurses or external, including child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), sexual health clinics or specialist support organisations. Schools should acknowledge that some children may not feel able or ready to access support directly after a disclosure is made, highlighting the importance of offering children a range of options and ensuring support is accessible and non-threatening.

In Shropshire a windscreen model identifies levels of needs and the support required to meet them.



The windscreen above is based on the principle that support should be provided as soon as possible, at the lowest level proportionate to the assessed needs of the child (including any unborn children). The aim is to step up support to children and families if/when there are new or further concerns, to prevent things becoming more difficult whilst the child and family continues to receive Universal support. Once needs are being met, levels of support can then be stepped down. For more information staff should access the SSCP Threshold Guidance

<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/assets/clients/6/Shropshire%20Downloads/SSCP%20Childrens%20Threshold%20Document%20-%20FINAL%20March%202021.pdf>

5.2 External support

It is recommended that schools access and promote sites such as National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), ChildLine and Child Exploitation & On-line Protection Centre (CEOP). Schools can download resources which may support this guidance e.g. posters/leaflets.

NSPCC helpline

A helpline was launched by the NSPCC on 1st April 2021 to support potential victims of sexual harassment and abuse. Run by the NSPCC it aims to provide advice and support to both children and adults who are victims of abuse in school. It will also include how to contact the police to report crimes. The advice line is also available to support professionals and parents. **NSPCC helpline number is 0800 136 663.**

This dedicated helpline will offer support to:

- all children and young people making current and non-recent disclosures of abuse
- any children or young people who want to talk about being involved or witnessing any incidents
- any adults who have experienced non-recent abuse
- parents and carers who have any concerns about their own or other children
- professionals who work in schools and need support in this or related issues.

This school promotes the use of this helpline by;

- Posters around the school
- Promoted in school assemblies & staff meetings
- Newsletters to parents
- On the school website or in school prospectus

NSPCC Schools Programme

Primary schools can access the NSPCC Schools Programme for free. The NSPCC Speak out Stay safe programme (formerly known as Childline Schools Service) is delivered by specially trained NSPCC staff and volunteers. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/working-with-schools/speak-out-stay-safe-service/>.

The programme consists of an assembly presentation for children aged 4-11 followed by a one hour classroom workshop for children in Y5/6 to help children:

- Understand abuse in all its forms and recognise the signs of abuse
- Know how to protect themselves from all forms of abuse

Our School (primary only) last had the School Programme delivered to pupils on (insert date).

ChildLine

ChildLine is a private, confidential and safe service for children and young people up to the age of 19 to contact for help. A child or young person can contact a ChildLine counsellor about anything on 08001111 or a 1-2-1 chat (like instant messenger) or send an email to <https://www.childline.org.uk>

Children calling ChildLine are offered 'confidentiality' which means not telling anyone else about what the child has said so that children feel safe talking knowing that no-one else will find out.

A ChildLine counsellor would only need to say or do something if:

- The child asks them to do say or do something on their behalf
- ChildLine believe the child's life or someone else's life was in danger
- The child is being hurt by someone in a position of trust who has access to other children like a teacher or a police officer
- The child tells ChildLine that they are seriously harming another person.

If a ChildLine counsellor is worried about the safety of someone who isn't able to speak for themselves, like a very young child, they might need to tell someone to keep the child safe.

Breaking a child's confidentiality is not something that ChildLine does easily. They will think about this carefully so if there is anything the child can do they should contact let the ChildLine counsellor to let them know they are now safe.

Children do not have to give their name. Children can make up a name if they don't want to give their real name. If they do give their name it doesn't mean that a ChildLine counsellor would use it,

When children go to ChildLine on line they will be asked to choose a username and nickname. This can be anything but to keep the account secure, children should not share their username and password.

All telephone calls to ChildLine are free, can be made at any time, day or night and children can ring about any problem, whether asking for themselves or because they are worried about a friend. Calls do not appear on phone bills and are not charged by any UK mobile network.

The ChildLine website also contains a 'hide page button' which if clicked can immediately take the child away from the ChildLine website to Google home page which may be necessary if the child is using a computer in a public place or somewhere that someone might see which website they are visiting.

The website also provides information to children about how to hide their visits to the ChildLine website by providing step by step instructions of how to clear the history about which website they have been to from the website browser.

Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

The CEOP is a useful online resource (<http://www.ceop.police.uk/>) to signpost children and young people and also allows them to make a report to the national Crime Agency (NCA) if they feel uncomfortable or worried about someone they are chatting to online. Ultimately all children are encouraged to ring the police on 999 if they feel in danger or have a real emergency.

The site allows the child or young person to click onto their age category i.e.

5-7 years old

8-10 years old

11-13 years old

14+ years old

5-7 years old.

The CEOP suggests that children in this age range should:

- tell a grownup they like and trust their mum or dad or whoever looks after them at home if they feel upset about anything they have seen on the computer or if anyone has said something which makes them feel bad or funny inside.
- Contact ChildLine on 08001111 if they want to talk to someone else.
- To stay safe when they are using a computer by adhering to the school's safer user policy.
- Ultimately children in this age range can make a CEOP Report if they are being approached online about sex or are suffering sexual abuse, or have been the victim of cyberbullying. The child will need to provide their real name and away to contact them.

8-10 year olds

The CEOP directs children in this age range about how to stay safe online. This advice includes that the child:

- Should always tell a trusted adult if they are upset or worried about something that has happened on online.
- Save any messages that have upset the child so they can show them to who they tell and they can help them get good advice about what else they can do
- Speak to a counsellor at ChildLine for free on 08001111 if they prefer to chat to someone else. They are reminded that call won't show up on the phone bill.
- Can make a CEOP Report if they are being approached online about sex or are suffering sexual abuse, or have been the victim of cyberbullying. The child will need to provide their real name and away to contact them.
- If the child wants to report a crime without giving their details they can call Crimestoppers on 0800555111 or report Crimestoppers online (<http://www.crimstoppers-uk.org/>)

11-13 & 14+ year olds

The CEOP directs children in this age range who may not find it easy to admit they need help to:

- Firstly seek help from a trusted adult; parent/ care or teacher as the first step if they are worried about something that has happened to them or a friend.

- Go to the ChildLine website or phone a ChildLine counsellor if they want to speak to someone else on 08001111 and advised how to make a CEOP Report if they are being approached online about sex, are suffering sexual abuse, or have been the victim of cyberbullying. The child will need to provide their real name and away to contact them.
- If the child wants to report a crime without giving their details they can call Crimestoppers on 0800555111 or report Crimestoppers online (<http://www.crimstoppers-uk.org/>).

7. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body will monitor the outcomes and impact of this policy/procedure on an annual/bi-annual basis in conjunction with school representatives.



Who can
I talk to?

Sometimes things happen that make us feel worried, scared or upset. Whatever has happened, **it is not your fault.** The best thing to do is tell an adult you trust how you are feeling and what has happened. They will be able to help you.

Who can help me?

Think of an adult you trust who makes you feel safe. That might be:

- Your dad, mum or carer
- Another family member
- Your teacher or another adult at school
- Another grown up that you trust

I still want to talk to someone, where do I go?

After you've talked to them, if you feel you still need help, don't give up!

You can also get help by calling ChildLine on 0800 1111 or if you have been abused in school you can phone the NSPCC helpline 0800 136 663. If you need more help because of something has happened online, you can get support from CEOP <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> you can click on a button that looks like this



APPENDIX 2

Flowchart of action for reporting concerns of abuse or suspected abuse