

Safeguarding Newsletter



Spring Term 2022

At Alverton Primary School, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and of utmost priority.

The aim of our termly safeguarding newsletter is to communicate key information to parents concerning safeguarding and how as a school we aim to keep you informed to actively promote the safeguarding and welfare of all our pupils. We try to have a different focus each term to provide information that is helpful for our parents about situations that their children might face now or in the future.

You can find further safeguarding information in the Safeguarding section of our website, including all our previous Safeguarding newsletters which contain a range of safeguarding information.

<http://www.alverton.org.uk/website/safeguarding/85998> and http://www.alverton.org.uk/website/online_safety_for_families/246722

Gangs and Young People

This term's newsletter aims to give parents and carers information on how to identify and respond if their children are affected by gangs.

What is a gang?

Being in a gang can make children feel part of something where they belong. However, some gangs take part in criminal activity and often try to target children to become involved. Being part of a gang like this can cause significant harm to a child as they might be abused, exploited or put into dangerous situations where they are encouraged to engage in illegal activity. Once children become involved in a gang, it can be very difficult to leave.

Some reasons why a young person may join a gang are:

- Respect and status
- To gain friends
- A sense of belonging
- Excitement
- To find a substitute family
- Power
- Protection
- Money
- Peer pressure

Childline has a really good section on their website about gangs which is well worth a look.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/crime-law/gangs/>

Signs to look out for:

Gangs often leave signs of their presence and your child might adopt some of these signs either as a member or an associate of a gang. Any sudden changes in your child's lifestyle should be discussed.

- Signs may include:
- Specific dress style
 - Poor behaviour
 - Having more than one mobile phone
 - Unexplained expensive gifts
 - Talking differently - new slang or language with an aggressive tone
 - Poor school results or skipping school
 - Carrying weapons
 - Unexplained injuries or sums of money / possessions
 - Staying out unusually late
 - Graffiti style tags on possessions

Click here to find out how some gangs recruit children:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6ATP1mAlws>

What does the law say?

Being in a gang isn't against the law. But being involved with illegal activities (that some gangs do) could be an offence. If an offender was part of a group or a gang, this may lead to a longer sentence.

If your child's presence (as a bystander) or actions lead to a crime they could be charged with the same offence as the main offender. For example, if they provided support or encouragement to a fellow gang member who committed a robbery or injured someone, they too could be charged with the same offence. This is called joint enterprise.

They could go to prison or end up with a criminal record if they were involved with gun and knife crime, violence or harassment, turf wars or postcode wars, County lines (moving drugs to be sold in different parts of the country for a gang), carrying, using or selling drugs, theft or other illegal activities or inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Being involved in a gang could have future implications. Having a criminal record means that it could be difficult to be:

- accepted into a university, college or higher education
- able to get a job, internship or do work experience
- allowed to travel to some countries, like the USA.

If your child is already involved

If your child is already involved in a gang, they may not want to talk about it and they may be scared. It is important that they know you want to listen and support them. Make sure they know they have a choice.

Stay calm. Ask questions, but listen too. Don't be afraid of confrontation, but try not to approach them with anger and accusations. Try to understand the situation from their point of view and why they have joined the gang. Ask them what you can do to help. Try to agree about what they should do next. Work with them to find solutions and choices.

Seek help from local community organisations, the school or youth services. They can offer specialist support and programmes to help them leave the gang. You can also contact local support networks such as neighbourhood police officers connected to your community.

The NSPCC have extended the use of their helpline to provide information and advice to parents and others concerned by young people you may be involved or affected by gang activity.

0800 800 5000

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/gangs-criminal-exploitation/>

Who can I talk to if I am worried about a child?

If you see it, hear it or know about it - report it!

This could be a child being neglected or any other kind of abuse.

Remember - safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Mr Higgs is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Alverton School and **Mrs Wicks** is the Deputy DSL. They will always be willing to listen to any concerns you may have.

If they are not available, Mrs Clemens, Mr Dawe, Mrs Daylak, Mrs Hall, Mrs Hughes, Mrs O'Neill and Mrs O'Rourke have all received additional safeguarding training and will be able to help you.

01736 364087

Cornwall Multi-Agency Referral Unit
0300 123 1116

NSPCC 
HELPLINE
0808 800 5000
help@nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine
0800 1111 