



WALTHAMSTOW HALL
SEVENOAKS

FOR PUPILS: WHAT TO DO AND WHO TO TALK TO, CONFIDENTIALLY, IF YOU MAY BE SUFFERING ABUSE

Introduction

Child abuse is when someone under 18 is being harmed, or not being looked after properly. It is no respecter of class, wealth or ethnicity. People who abuse children may look, and behave, as quite ordinary, respectable people. Sometimes children or young people can abuse other children or young people.

Grooming, behaviour which can appear to make a young person feel special and cared about but is actually prelude to abuse, can make it difficult for someone to realise that they are being harmed for a long time. An abuser may tell a child or young person that they will not be believed, that it is their fault or that they or their family will be in trouble if they talk. Finding the words to describe what is happening can be tough. This can make it difficult for children to be believed, or to find help. It can take many years for people to talk about abuse that happened in childhood.

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse is never right. It is not your choice. The NSPCC says: "Abuse is always wrong and it is never the young person's fault."

The NSPCC defines child abuse in the following way:

"Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect."

What can you do if you are worried?

Although it may be difficult, it is important to talk to somebody:

- If it happens to you, tell someone whom you trust, as soon as you can. Whatever has happened, there is help available. Things can get better.
- If it happens to a friend, encourage them to tell someone at once.
- If you are worried that a friend is being harmed or has been harmed by someone, tell someone. Talk to an adult you trust could be the first step to things getting better for them.

Who can you talk to?

The Headmistress is the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). You can see the Headmistress or one of the Deputy DSLs at any time if you are being abused, or if someone that you know is being abused. They have had training and can contact other agencies which are able to provide additional support. They will listen to you and take you seriously, whatever has happened and whoever is involved.

You should speak to them even if the abuse is taking place outside school.

Some people may prefer to speak to the School Medical Staff or to another member of staff. Any member of staff to whom you disclose information a child or young person being harmed, abused or who is at risk of harm is obliged to pass it on to the DSL. The important thing is that you talk to someone whom you trust, who will listen to you.

Want to talk to someone outside school?

ChildLine is a free confidential helpline for children and young people. You can call any time on 0800 1111 or go to their website: www.childline.org.uk

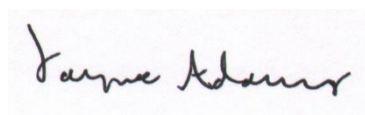
The NSPCC's helpline is 0808 800 5000. Their website is: www.nspcc.org.uk

The Samaritans can be called at any time on 116123.

A further website with helpful advice: www.kidscape.org.uk

REMEMBER – nobody has the right to abuse children or young people. It is very important that you tell someone.

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Next review: November 2024



Signed: Date: 17 November 2023...

Mrs J Adams
Chairman of the Governing Body

