



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 Alice Jones (Headteacher), Gillian Dyson (Pastoral Manager), Caroline Auty (Class Teacher), Laura Smales (Learning Support Assistant), Joanne Brown (Class Teacher) and Oliver Thurlby (Class Teacher)

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 2024	May 2026

School Vision

We provide the rich soil allowing children to flourish and develop deep roots. We nurture **growth**, enabling children to thrive as our Christian values blossom in their lives. We cultivate a sense of pride in our rural **community** where children are **loved** and valued.

May our children flourish in their youth like well-nurtured plants. Psalm 144 v 12.

Throughout our curriculum and school life, along with our school vision, these three golden strands permeate through everything we do.

Community

Jesus often spoke of unity in our communities and encouraging one another on our journey. He spoke of bearing each other's burdens in love and helping those in need.

'Live in harmony with one another.' Romans 12 v 16



Love

It says in the Bible that God is Love and encompasses all that is loving and good. Jesus showed the ultimate unconditional love when he laid down his life for us on the cross. Therefore, this love should lead to a desire to love other people.

'Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us.' Ephesians 5 v 2



Growth

Just like a plant, we must endure the difficult times along with the good; but God has sent us his Holy Spirit to help and strengthen us so we can bear fruit and grow in the likeness of Christ.

'Grown in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' 2 Peter 3 v 18



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 (2021) 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 be 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 at 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.