



## **Safeguarding Children with SEND**

'Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.'

(Keeping Children Safe in Education,  
Jan 2021)

Studies have shown that children with SEND are 3.8 times more likely to be neglected or physically abused, 3.1 times more likely to be sexually abused and 3.9 times more likely to be emotionally abused. In fact, findings show that 31% of children with SEND suffer abuse compared with 9% of the rest of the population. Further to this, children with SEND are also at a higher risk of experiencing multiple abuses and of enduring multiple episodes of abuse.

In order to get help when they the fear or experience abuse, we recognise and understand that children with SEND have significant additional barriers to overcome in comparison their peers. These include:

- Some children may not recognise the abuse
- Children might not be able to ask for help
- The child may rely on their abuser to meet their needs – making it even more difficult to speak out
- Parents and professionals may miss signs of abuse/neglect, mistaking them as part of a child's condition
- Professionals working with children with SEND may not be trained to spot the signs of abuse and neglect
- Children with disabilities and their families may feel isolated or without support due to a limited number of accessible services, meaning they may not know where to find help
- Abusers may try to excuse their behaviour, blaming it on the difficulties of caring for a child with SEND
- Professionals who work to support parents' ability to meet their child's additional needs may overlook parental behaviours that are not adequate
- Child protection professionals might not have the specialised skills to properly communicate with the child, or to accurately assess or understand a disabled child's needs.

At Oxbridge Lane, measures are in place to ensure the effective safeguarding of children with SEND. This includes:

- An inclusive curriculum that is relevant and appropriate to meet the needs of all learners.
- Quality first social and emotional teaching through our whole school PSHE programme to teach children about how to keep themselves safe.
- Targeted social and emotional support to build positive relationships with staff
- Explicit teaching of all social and emotional skills through the PSHE and life skills curriculum
- Key adult methodology embedded into daily classroom practice
- Worry boxes for children to communicate with staff using their chosen method
- Daily 'check-in' sessions for the most vulnerable children
- Working in partnership with parents building close relationships with them to offer bespoke support
- Establish links with external agencies (e.g. Early Help, The Bungalow Project) to enable rapid identification of changes in behaviour and presentation and enable effective early intervention

During remote education, we continue to offer bespoke monitoring to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of all children with SEND. Children attend 'Zoom' sessions with their class teacher and the teacher will maintain daily contact through Google Classrooms. Families of children with SEND will also receive a telephone call from a familiar staff member at least fortnightly (those who are struggling to engage get increased calls) to check on the welfare of the family and enable early intervention should concerns arise.

If children do not engage with remote education or if a staff member has any concerns regarding the wellbeing of a pupil with SEND, these concerns are discussed with the SENCo and the DSL. A member of SLT will contact the family and offer any further support required. If we are unable to contact a child for any reason, a welfare home visit will be carried out. Should any concerns be raised from this visit or if no contact is made, procedures will be followed. Where necessary, concerns will be reported to the Children's Hub.