

ABBOT'S LEA SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mrs Ania Hildrey, M.Ed, B.Ed(Hons), NPQH

9 September 2021

Dear Families



Ref: Safeguarding and Positive Behaviour Support at Abbot's Lea School

I am writing to you today following some national and local press coverage of a highly disturbing incident at one of the special schools in Liverpool during which a Police officer based at that school was found guilty of assaulting a young student with Autism on the school premises.

I wanted to immediately reassure our school community that this incident did not take place at Abbot's Lea School.

This does not take away from shock, upset and worry – for the students, their families and also for the professionals.

With that in mind, I want to summarise our safeguarding and positive behaviour support practices at our school and share with you escalation protocol, should anyone at all be concerned at any point about our work with the children and young people.

To start with, my expectation as our school's Headteacher is that every staff member working here is a positive role model and a proactive protector and advocate of children's rights, completely focused on keeping them safe at all times.

We have robust recruitment, induction and training processes, with all staff – regardless of their role and previous work experience or training – undertaking safeguarding and Positive Behaviour Support training each year, with frequent refreshers and updates during the year.

When incidents occur – and they do occur as we have nearly 300 students with most complex needs in our society - we support them proactively and always in line with the methods of working approved.

If an incident occurs during which a student requires physical support to keep them or others safe and restrictive physical interventions (also known as restraint) is used, it will only be used as a last resort and in line with the **Team Teach** as our approved method of such support.

Adults involved in the incident debrief fully after it takes place and record fully what happened, who was involved and what could be done in the future to minimise the risk of the incident re-occurring.

If your child's day at school was that difficult and there was an issue we believe you need to be alerted to – such as an incident or an accident – we will always aim to contact you before your child arrives home that afternoon.

If we are ever concerned about your child's wellbeing or safety, we will contact you that same day. This contact will typically come directly from the Class Team, but might also come from a Key Stage Leader, or a member of the Multidisciplinary Team or our safeguarding team.

Equally, if at any point you become concerned about your child, you should always contact the Class Team in the first instant – most matters arising each day can be fully appraised by those who see your child every day and know exactly what your child's day was truly like.

If your concerns are not resolved, please feel free to escalate them to either of my senior leaders supporting class teams:

Ms Alison Twomey, Head of Care and Safeguarding: alison.twomey@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
or

Mrs Emily Tobin, Deputy Headteacher: deputy@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Whistleblowing

If you are ever concerned about any adults working with children behaving in a way that might be suspicious, inappropriate or unsafe, please contact me immediately and directly: headteacher@abbotsleaschool.co.uk – this email is monitored all year round for any such safeguarding alerts and I will always respond within 24 hours of receipt.

If ever you believe that I, despite being the school's Headteacher, am unsafe and I might pose the risk to children, you should raise your concerns without delay with the Chair of Governors, Mr Robert Lowe: robert.lowe@abbotsleaschool.co.uk.

In short – there is nobody in our school that is above the scrutiny, or indeed, above the law.

Quite the opposite: we are totally committed to safeguarding our students and keeping them safe in education and helping them keep safe in the community - we must all take this personal and collective duty seriously.

I do realise this may alarm some of you – this is not my intention. In fact, we regularly communicate on the topic of safeguarding with the students, staff and the families, including via the Head's Weekly Newsletter, but I felt it appropriate to capture our commitment and systems in the more formal letter in light of the press information.

I trust this helps and reassures you at the start of this new academic year, which we hope will be happy, safe and successful for all.

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Hildrey
Headteacher