



Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Physical Chastisement

There are many different views about physical chastisement, but it is widely accepted that hurting children is not the best way to teach them right from wrong – nor are methods that involve humiliating or threatening children, shouting at them, or destroying their confidence.

Here at Westbourne Primary School, we agree that anything that causes harm to a child is unacceptable, even if it is believed to be part of a cultural or faith tradition.

The school has a safeguarding duty to report all incidents of suspected or confirmed physical chastisement to social care and the police.

Any punishment to a child which leaves visible bruising, grazes, scratches, minor swelling, cuts or stress injuries from prolonged standing, position holding or squatting are banned by law in the United Kingdom and constitutes the criminal offence of actual bodily harm. This can carry a sentence of five years in prison.

It is also important to understand that where no injuries are visible, physically chastising a child may be considered common assault by the police.

In Sutton, we have a number of children coming to the attention of police and social care because of their parents using physical chastisement.

From an initiative to reduce the number of children experiencing this form of harm, the London Borough of Sutton have consulted with other Local Authorities and asked schools to make parents and carers aware of this information.

If you would like advice on how to manage your child(ren)'s behaviour at home, or would like information on parenting courses and resources, then please let the Family Support Worker (Mrs Mills) know.

The NSPCC also provide a need-to-know guide on positive parenting

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1195/positive-parenting.pdf>

Westbourne's Safeguarding Policy can also be found on our school website.

<https://www.westbourne.sutton.sch.uk/safeguarding-and-online-safety/>

Yours faithfully,

Westbourne Safeguarding Team

