

SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER



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Dear Parents and Carers,

At Sandwell Valley School, the safety, wellbeing, and protection of every pupil is our highest priority. As a special school and Alternative Provision, we work closely with families, local partners, and safeguarding agencies to ensure that children are kept safe from harm, supported emotionally, and helped to thrive.

Safeguarding is about protecting children and young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, radicalisation, bullying, and unsafe online activity. It also involves promoting wellbeing, listening to pupils, acting early when concerns arise, and working in partnership with families and professionals.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

Andy MacKenzie

Telephone: 0121 679 7522

Andy oversees safeguarding across the school and is the main point of contact for any safeguarding concerns. If you are worried about a child's safety or wellbeing, please contact the school as soon as possible.

Local Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding partners across Sandwell and the West Midlands continue to focus on risks affecting children and teenagers both in and outside the home.

Violence and Criminal Exploitation

There is ongoing concern around Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), where young people may be pressured or groomed into gangs, drug dealing (including County Lines activity), and "cuckooing", where criminals take over vulnerable people's homes.

Serious youth violence and knife crime remain a priority, particularly incidents involving young people in public spaces.

Work also continues to disrupt serious organised crime groups that influence youth disorder and drug activity across the borough.

Vulnerability and Abuse

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) continues to be monitored closely, alongside harmful sexual behaviour.
- Modern slavery and trafficking remain safeguarding priorities, with Sandwell recognised for strong identification and response work.
- Domestic abuse and sexual violence, particularly affecting women and girls, are key concerns in parts of the borough.
- Radicalisation and extremist grooming (PREVENT) form part of safeguarding monitoring across schools and services.

Wellbeing and Neglect

- Mental health and emotional wellbeing are central to safeguarding responses, particularly where children have experienced trauma.
- Chronic neglect remains a significant risk factor, often linked with poverty, substance misuse, or parental mental health difficulties.
- Cyberbullying, online grooming, harmful content, and misuse of images continue to be major online safety concerns.
- These risks are shared across neighbouring areas including Walsall, Birmingham, and Dudley.

Online Safety

How Parents and Carers can help



Children spend increasing time online through social media, gaming, messaging apps, and new digital technologies. While many platforms offer positive opportunities, risks include inappropriate contact, harmful content, bullying, pressure to share images, and online exploitation.

You can support your child by:

- talking regularly about what they do online
- knowing which apps and games they use
- setting parental controls and privacy settings
- encouraging them to speak up if something worries them
- reminding them never to share personal details or images

Health Relationships & Personal Safety in Schools

As part of our safeguarding and personal development work, we have welcomed **Brook Outreach services** in Sandwell to deliver sessions with pupils focusing on:

- healthy relationships
- respect and consent
- online safety
- keeping themselves safe

brook



These sessions support pupils to understand boundaries, make safe choices, and know how to seek help.

Safeguarding themes are also embedded across our curriculum, alongside emotional wellbeing, anti-bullying, and digital safety education.

Local Support & Signposting

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership
- Telephone: 0121 569 3100 – to report concerns about a child at risk
- West Midlands Police
- 101 for non-emergencies
- 999 in an emergency
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
- YoungMinds – advice and support for young people and parents on mental health

www.youngminds.org.uk

- Kooth – free online counselling and wellbeing support for young people
- CAMHS and local wellbeing services can also be accessed through GP referral and Family Hubs.
- Family and Early Help Support
- Sandwell Family Hubs – support for families, parenting advice, SEND services, and early help
- Similar family support services operate across Walsall, Birmingham, and Dudley.
- Financial and Practical Support
- Food Banks and Crisis Support (local examples include Trussell Trust and community food banks across Sandwell and neighbouring boroughs)
- Sandwell Council and Family Hubs can help families access emergency food, benefits advice, and local hardship support.
- National Support Services
- Childline – 0800 1111 (support for children and young people)
- NSPCC Helpline – 0808 800 5000 (advice for parents and carers)

If You Are Worried About a Child

If a child is in immediate danger, please call 999.

For safeguarding concerns:

- Contact Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership on 0121 569 3100
- Speak to our DSL, Andy MacKenzie, on 0121 679 7522

All concerns are taken seriously and handled sensitively.

Working Together

Safeguarding works best when schools and families work in partnership. You can help by:

- talking openly with your child about safety and wellbeing
- monitoring online activity appropriately
- sharing concerns early
- engaging with school support and workshops

Thank you for your continued support in keeping our pupils safe, supported, and confident.