



Cirrus Primary Academy Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 09642581. Registered office address: Wallington Primary Academy, Mollison Drive, Wallington, SM6 9JM, Sutton

Date 06/10/2023

Safeguarding Children

Dear Parents/Carers,

There are many different views about physically disciplining children, but it is widely accepted that physically hurting children is not the best way to teach them right from wrong. This includes whether you believe it to be a part of a cultural or faith tradition. It can be tempting to think a smack sorts out incidents like disobedience and biting, but it actually does nothing to teach your child how you want them to behave. The same can be said of causing emotional harm to a child, as methods that involve humiliating, threatening or shouting at children can destroy their confidence, make the behaviour worse, or damage family relationships.

Here at Cirrus Primary Academy Trust, we agree that anything that causes harm to a child is unacceptable.

Schools have a duty to report all incidents of suspected or confirmed physical harm of a child to social care and the police. This is because any form of 'unreasonable' punishment to a child which leaves a visible mark on them (i.e. bruising, grazes, scratches, minor swelling, reddening of the skin, or cuts) is considered an assault and is illegal in the United Kingdom. Stress injuries caused to a child from being made to stand, hold a position or to squat for prolonged periods of time is also banned.

Smacking or chastising that does not leave a mark is now illegal in Wales and Scotland, and there is currently pressure being placed on the Government to make it illegal in England and Northern Ireland too. It is therefore important to understand that even if a child has been smacked but no injuries are visible, social care or the police may still choose to take further action depending on the wider circumstances.

In Sutton, we have a number of children coming to the attention of police and social care because of their parents/carers physically harming them. To try and address this issue, Sutton has consulted with other Local Authorities to develop a home-school agreement, which we as a Trust have chosen to adopt. We hope that you will support us in our endeavour to reduce the risk of physical chastisement by carefully reading the attached home-school agreement.

At Cirrus Primary Academy Trust we want to work in partnership with parents, and so If you would like to discuss how to manage your child/ren's behaviour at home, please contact the school office. Below are also some helpful links that may also like to look at:

- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1195/positive-parenting.pdf>
- <https://maudsleycharity.org/familiesunderpressure/>
- Sutton Council provides parenting support via the Solihull Approach parenting programme, which can be accessed for free at <https://inourplace.co.uk/> (Access code is 'TREE')

We thank you for your continued support in keeping our children safe from harm.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs S Roberts
CEO and Trust Safeguarding Lead