



Important Child Protection

Information

Following our recent annual staff Child Protection training, we feel it is important to let you know about some safeguarding concerns that we often come across at Longleaze and to inform you of our procedures in dealing with these concerns.

Smacking

What does the law say?



In England it is unlawful for a parent or carer to smack their child, except where this amounts to 'reasonable punishment' regardless of any individual, cultural or religious justification. There is a grey area in the Law as to whether a 'smack' amounts to reasonable punishment. However, physical punishment will be considered 'unreasonable' if it leaves a mark on the child or if the child is hit with an implement such as a cane or a belt.

What are our procedures at Longleaze?



If it comes to our attention that a child has been smacked we will contact you to ensure that you are aware of the law, to tell you about the downsides to smacking a child and to offer advice about alternative methods of parenting.

If we believe that unreasonable physical punishment has occurred, we will contact the Wiltshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for advice and follow their procedures. This may involve making a referral to Children's Social Services.

Leaving children home alone



What does the law say?

Strange as it may seem, there's no set age for leaving children home alone. The law simply says that you shouldn't leave a child alone if they'll be at risk.

There's such a wide variation in the rate that children mature that it would be almost impossible to come up with a "one size fits all" law. Instead, the choice is left to parents. They know their children best and can use their own judgement.

The NSPCC advice on leaving children at home alone is as follows:

- Babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone
- Children under the age of 12 are rarely mature enough to cope in an emergency and should not be left at home alone for a long period of time
- Children under the age of 16 should not be left alone overnight
- Parents and carers can be prosecuted for neglect if it is judged that they placed a child at risk by leaving them at home alone
- A child should never be left at home alone if they do not feel comfortable with this, regardless of their age
- If a child has additional needs, these should be considered when leaving them at home alone or with an older sibling
- When leaving a younger child with an older sibling think about what may happen if they were to have a falling out - would they both be safe?

What are our procedures at Longleaze?

If it comes to our attention that a child is being left alone at home which we believe puts that child at risk then we will contact you in the first instance to discuss our concerns. If this continues to happen we will contact Children's Social Services to inform them about our concerns.



Inappropriate films,

video games or internet usage

What does the law say?

Some films, websites and games use age restrictions and checks to make sure that children don't see unsuitable content.

Children must be at least 13 to register on most social networking websites. But there's not a lot standing in the way of children joining at a younger age.

Age limits are there to keep children safe so you shouldn't feel pressurised into letting younger children join these websites

What are our procedures at Longleaze?

At Longleaze we have received extensive training on the hidden dangers of children having unsupervised access to the internet and inappropriate materials. We are extremely concerned about issues such as

- Grooming
- Child Sexual Exploitation



- Radicalisation
- Access to pornography
- Cyber-bullying

If we are in any way concerned about your child's safety in any of these areas we will inform you immediately, unless we thought to do so would place your child in further danger. We may also inform Children's Social Services, the police or the PREVENT team.

Many parents are of the opinion that these issues do not affect their children; however, at Longleaze we have had experience of every single one of the above incidents.

How you can support us?

It is everyone's responsibility to keep our children safe and free from harm. If we contact you regarding any of the above, please understand that it is because we have your child's best interests and welfare at the center of everything we do. In most cases a simple conversation with a parent assures us that the child is safe and there is a reasonable explanation. In a small number of cases we may need to get advice from an outside agency to ensure that child is safe. We will always try to work with parents to provide support and advice before making such a referral.



If you would like any more information about any of the above, please refer to the websites below or make an appointment with Mrs Seal, our current Child Protection Lead, to discuss.

Thank you for your support

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/>

<http://www.wiltshirelscb.org/parents-carers> 'Guide to keeping your child safe'

<http://www.pegi.info/en/index/id/33/> Guide to age ratings and their meanings