St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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Dear Parent,

The safety and well-being of our pupils is something that our school strives hard to ensure and we continue to work hard to provide ways to help you tell us if you or your children have any problems or worries which the School needs to know about such as bullying.

Reporting issues is a very effective way to enable us to deal with risks before they escalate into harm, and we already have several ways in which you can report to our school. That goes a long way in helping us create the safe and reliable environment for your children that you expect our school to be.

We understand too that sometimes, coming into school to tell us about these issues can not always be an easy thing to do. Time? Arranging an appointment? Speaking with staff? Sometimes it can be a subject that you need to bring to our attention without wanting to identify yourself, but that you feel we need to know, particularly if it involves children's safety.

That's why in a few weeks/next term we will be launching **Whisper** on our school website, an anonymous reporting service for pupils, families and local community that allows you to send a message or text to a confidential school email account where staff experienced in responding to issues will receive it.

How does it work?

Clicking on the **Whisper** link on our site will take you to an online form where you can leave your message. You can choose to send it anonymously or, if you want us to get back to you, you can leave your contact details. **Whisper** does not collect any information to identify a sender unless they choose to leave it.

Your pupils can anonymously report issues to you via SMS by texting LIF1 + their message to 07624 804279

You can also send an anonymous text by following the SMS instructions on our school website.

Why do we think this is important?

For a variety of reasons, young people may sometimes find it very difficult to report issues at school. Offering an anonymous route may empower them to raise concerns they may not have felt able to raise before.

We know that reporting can raise awareness of an issue across the school and things can change because of that, through discussion and education. Reporting someone who is bullying, for example, can very often focus attention on that person and is sometimes enough to change their behaviour.

Whilst your report may not always get the solution you want to see, reporting bad behaviours can often stop them from happening to others. If people know their unacceptable behaviour will be reported they are less likely to do it and this can have a positive effect across the whole school.

What happens next?

Over the next few weeks we will be discussing **Whisper** with the children as part of our wider safeguarding education programme: how, why and when to use it. How it can provide a useful route for them to help safeguard themselves, their friends or the wider school community.

Whisper will be active on 4th February 2022

If you have any questions about the service then please contact Mrs Varty or Mrs Starkie at the school or visit https://st-marys-cp.secure-primarysite.net/reporting-a-concern-1/ for more details about the service.

We thank you for your continued support. With your support, we are confident we can build a positive school community in which you, and your family play such an important and valuable role.

Many thanks

Jayne Varty
Online Safety Lead