

Headteacher

Mrs Elspeth Geden BA (Hons), MA (Ed)

Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Sarah Stewart BA (Hons)



Dear Parents/Carers,

In Greenwich, we have a high number of children coming to the attention of police and social care because of their parents using physical chastisement. A survey undertaken by Greenwich Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) Schools Work Group shows that a significant proportion of pupils from Greenwich schools had received physical forms of punishment at home.

Here at Montbelle, 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. Some practices that may be culturally acceptable in some parts of the world are banned by law in the United Kingdom, including physical punishment with an implement and physical punishment that causes a mark.

Schools have a statutory responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children both in and out of school. UK law protects every child up to the age of 18 years from cruel and abusive treatment by their parents and carers.

- It is against the law for a parent to use physical punishment on their child that causes marks.
- It is illegal to use an implement to hit a child.
- Parents who cause deliberate harm to their child could face criminal prosecution.
- It is against the law for anyone who is not the child's parent to use ANY form of physical punishment.

Parents and carers should understand that they are responsible for disciplining my children or those under my care when they are not in school. They should be aware that the use of physical force in disciplining them may be illegal in certain circumstances including, but not limited to:

- where an implement (e.g. belt, stick, slipper) has been used or
- where the use of that force has resulted in visible injury;
- the use of prolonged physical stress positions (This is where children are placed in a position of discomfort for a long period of time).

In these circumstances, the school has a **statutory** duty to report such incidents to Children's Social Care and the police may be asked to investigate.

Should you want further advice and information on statutory guidance, legislation and parenting support please see the Greenwich Safeguarding Children Partnership website, which provides advice for parents and carers, including positive and effective disciplining methods www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk

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

Yours faithfully,
Elspeth Geden
Headteacher