



Willow Primary Academy

SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER—5

FEBRUARY 2024

Safeguarding Team

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety, please speak to a member of the school's safeguarding team.



Debra Arthur

DSL/Family Welfare Officer



Mandy Walton
Piper Centre
Manager / DDSL



Carly Tonks
Deputy Head & DDSL



Pete Hales
Head teacher & DDSL

Dear Parents & Carers,

A warm welcome to our current and new parents/carers.

Each month a Safeguarding Newsletter will come out giving you information on different types of Safeguarding—what it can look like for you, what it looks like for your child and who you can contact outside of school if you need extra support.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

What are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?

ACEs are specified traumatic events occurring before the age of 18 years. High or frequent exposure to ACEs, without the support of a trusted adult can lead to toxic stress, and can be grouped into three types: abuse, neglect and household adversity. The ten most commonly measured ACEs are: physical, sexual or emotional abuse, emotional or physical neglect, mental illness, substance misuse, an incarcerated relative, domestic abuse, and parental separation.

How do adverse childhood experiences affect people in adulthood

Repeated body stress-response systems (toxic stress) can cause hormonal imbalances, impair cognitive ability, and even change the way DNA is transcribed, causing ACEs to be passed down from one generation to the next. The length and frequency of exposure to toxic stress during childhood can in turn lead to health problems such as asthma, poor growth, frequent infections, learning difficulties and behavioural issues. Experiencing 4 or more ACEs is associated with significantly increased risk for 70% of the leading causes of death in adults including heart disease, stroke, cancer, respiratory disorder, Type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's, and suicide.

ACEs are not only associated with poorer health outcomes but a range of social and economic ones too. People with ACEs are more likely to under-perform in school, develop high-risk behaviours, and be on lower incomes. Deprivation, health, and social factors are closely related.

What can be done to tackle ACEs?

Early intervention to prevent ACEs and the worst effects of ACEs is key but it is important to recognise that is never too late to address the impact of trauma and that different individuals will require different kinds of support. The first 1000 days (pregnancy up to a child's second birthday), pre-school, primary school age and teenage years are critical windows for intervention. However, it can continue into adulthood, for example help with coping strategies and mental wellbeing support. People can be protected from the effects of their ACEs by building resilience. The most important mitigating factor is the buffering effect of a supportive relationship with at least one trusted adult.

The public sector, as well as voluntary and community organisations, can work together in partnership to better support individuals and families who are struggling to cope with the causes and impacts of ACEs. This means thinking about the person's needs more holistically, looking beyond the symptoms, and making the best use of assets and services available.

Telephone: 01452526442

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The 10 most recognised ACEs are:

- Physical, Sexual, Emotional Abuse
- Physical neglect, Emotional Neglect
- Mental Illness
- Substance misuse
- Parental Separation
- Domestic abuse
- Incarceration

In general, children who experience ACEs are more likely to have a parent who has also experienced ACEs. The potential negative impacts of ACEs can be substantial and can even be passed down through the generations. But they don't have to; there is always hope. Not everyone with ACEs will experience the same health harmful outcomes or go on to struggle in adulthood .

Building resilience has been shown to help people prevent and overcome many of the problems arising from childhood adversity and trauma. Supportive personal relationships with trusted adults and a sense of safety in the community are essential for people to flourish.

Here is an online course that explains further about ACEs [ACES \(acesonlinelearning.com\)](https://acesonlinelearning.com)

Resilience

What is resilience? Resilience is the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity

One trusted adult: Research has found that having a relationship with at least one trusted adult – parent, siblings, wider family networks, teacher and professionals can provide the buffering needed to overcome the effects of ACEs and toxic stress.

Resilience is a skill: Resilience isn't a personality trait, some people have instinctive resilience but it is a skill that we can all learn to practice and strengthen throughout life. The key ingredients in building resilience are supportive relationships and connections (Woerden, 2018; Shonkoff, 2018).

If you are struggling to cope with any situations with ACEs or just need support please see Debra Arthur Family Welfare Officer

Report any concerns

If you suspect a child is being abused or is in danger of being abused, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead/team or any member of staff. You can also contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on: 01452 426565 .

If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police immediately on 999