



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

It is the purpose of our school to provide an educational environment suited to all of the pupils entrusted to our care and we will seek to promote a caring, supportive and safe environment whereby staff and pupils can work in an atmosphere of mutual respect; where pupils can enjoy their learning within a secure and stimulating environment, so that each individual should achieve the highest level of spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual, personal, physical and social development of which he /she is capable .

Principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- At all times, there must be a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach and commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm
- Each agency involved must have an understanding of each other's professional values and accept each other's role, powers and responsibilities
- Any action taken by agencies must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to take account of the child's sex, age, stage of development, religion, culture & race
- The right of confidentiality for parents, carers, teachers, and children must be respected and information will only be shared in the interests of the child's welfare.

The Designated & Deputy Designated Teachers and Their Roles

Miss Murphy and Mrs McMullan, in assuming the above roles respectively, accept responsibility for:

- Maintaining detailed accurate up to date records of referrals/concerns in a secure place
- Ensuring that the Child Protection policy is updated and reviewed annually
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the procedures, including internal school arrangements
- Co-ordinating action by teachers in cases of suspected child abuse and reporting to the appropriate agencies and the Senior Management Officer
- Ensuring that the teaching staff and the school's EWO are aware of children in care or on the Child Protection Register
- Liaising with SEELB designated officers for advice and support
- Ensuring that parents receive a copy of Child Protection policy every 2 years

It is our aim through in-service training that all teaching staff knows:

- How to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make referral
- The CCMS child protection procedures and the Education and Library Board's policy and procedures and the designated teacher's role within them
- The role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies, who to contact and how to liaise with them
- The requirements on record – keeping
- The conduct of a Child Protection conference and how the designated teacher or another member of staff can make an appropriate contribution to it

Recognising Child Abuse

Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer, an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of the parent or carer to act or provide proper care or both. The abuse may take a number of forms including:

Neglect

The actual or likely persistent significant neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in significant impairment of the child's health or development.

Physical Injury

Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and / or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse.

School Procedures For Dealing With Suspected Or Disclosed Child Abuse

Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, preferably quoting words actually used. This should be signed, date etc and passed on to the Designated Teacher.

Staff should not give the child undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should reassure that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSUPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

1. Where there is cause for concern about a child, the teacher, staff member or volunteer will notify the designated Teacher as soon as possible. The concern must to be recorded, signed and dated.
2. The Designated Teacher will decide if the information should be referred immediately to Social Service. The Designated Teacher may consult with the Designated Officers for Child Protection at SEELB as part of the decision making process. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
3. if a decision is made not to refer the matter to Social Services, written records will clearly indicate the basis on which this decision is made.
4. if a decision to refer is made, the Designated Teacher will ensure that the following are immediately notified:
 - Social Services or the police
 - The Designated Officer for Child Protection at SEELB
 - The parent / carer (except where the parent / carer is the alleged abuser).

The referral will be followed up in writing within 24 hours using the standard UNOCINI referral form. A copy will be sent to the Child Protection Support Service for School (CPSSS), SEELB (this will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION')

- 5 If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately. She will then:
- Inform the chair of the Board of Governors (if he is not the subject of complaint)
 - Consult with the Designated SEELB Officer for Child Protection, CCMS and unions to form an initial assessment as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action
 - Maintain records of all steps

Where a matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be immediately removed from direct contact with children and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

- 6 If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher must be informed immediately. All aspects of the above procedures for complaints against a member of staff will be followed, save the role set out above for the principal will be exercised by the chairperson of the Board of Governors. CCMS, SEELB will be immediately consulted in any such case.
- 7 If a complaint is made against a volunteer, it will be treated in the same manner as complaints against a person who is not on the school's staff and the same procedures followed. If the principal has any concern that a child may be at risk, the services of the volunteer will be terminated immediately.

HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE

The school is committed to helping parents understand its responsibility for the welfare of all the children in its charge. Parents will be made aware of the school's Child Protection Policy at the Primary 1 induction meeting. They will be told that in the implementation of the policy, cases may be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child.

The school includes in its Prospectus, a summary of the Child Protection Policy and the procedures parents should follow to make a complaint and the recourse that they have if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The policy will be available on the school's website. Parents will be reminded of this at least every 2 years.

RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

The selection and appointment process is the starting point for ensuring that only those who are suitable are employed to work in close proximity with children, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

In order that all reasonable steps are taken to guard against employing someone who might harm our pupils, or put them at risk of harm, we follow the guidance on pre-employment checking and safer recruitment practices provided in:

- DE Circular 2006/06: Child Protection- recruitment of people to work with children and young people in educational settings
- DE Circular 2006/07: Child Protection- employment of substitute teachers
- DE Circular 2006/08: Child Protection – training requirements for school governors on staff recruitment and selection panels
- DE Circular 2006/09: Child Protection – criminal background checking of staff in schools – programme to extend coverage
- DE Circular 2006/25: Child Protection – vetting of school governors
- DE Circular 2007/01: Acceptable use of the internet and digital technologies in schools
- DE Circular 2008/03: pre employment checking of persons to work in schools – new arrangements

(all of the above available to view on DE website: www.deni.gov.uk Click on 'circulars')

Criminal Records checks will be carried out on all prospective employees, volunteers and school governors.

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Before commencing employment at the school, volunteers are briefed on the school's child Protection procedures. They will be introduced to the Designated Teacher and told how to report concerns.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

All staff ie teaching / non-teaching, paid / unpaid must be mindful that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards children and young people in their charge must be above reproach.

Private meetings with pupils.

When it is necessary to conduct a private interview with an individual pupil, it will be held in a room with visual access or with the door open.

It is advisable to inform another adult of the interview taking place or preferable to have another adult nearby or present during the interview.

Physical contact with pupils

Staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils. However, a young child who is distressed can be comforted by safe reassurance.

Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is or would be uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.

Physical punishment is illegal.

Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil, should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult.

Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been or may be misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Staff should be particularly careful during residentials, After School Clubs etc where more informal relationships tend to be usual.

Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

Staff need to take care when using materials of a sensitive nature. Parents may need to be consulted when using sex education programmes.

Relationships and Attitudes

Staff need to ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.

BULLYING

Bullying also constitutes a form of abuse by another child. Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for the victim to defend him / herself.

The school has a separate anti- bullying policy which is available at the school.

USE OF IMAGES, VIDEOS, WEBSITE, MOBILE PHONES

The school likes to take photographs and videos to advertise the range of activities the pupils are engaged in. These are displayed around the school or on the school's website. Written consent from parents will be sought on an annual basis. A parent can change their mind at any time by informing the principal.

We will ensure that all children are appropriately dressed and are depicted in an appropriate manner. All video recording and photography will take place in designated areas. No image will be used which would cause distress or embarrassment.

On our school website, we will avoid using personal details or full names. If a photograph of an individual child is used, the child's name will not be included in the accompanying text or photo caption.

When photographic images or videos are shared beyond the school, specific and separate permission will be obtained.

Parents must inform the school if they do not wish their child's image and or name to be published in the newspaper.

The development of ICT skills is considered to be an important curriculum priority. Children are encouraged to research subjects on the internet. This is centrally screened to protect children from viewing anything inappropriate. If any pupil or member of staff encounters an inappropriate image, this must be reported immediately to the designated teacher who will seek advice from SEELB and/or the police.

Pupils are not permitted to have their mobile phones on while on school premises. Children will be occasionally reminded of this in assembly. If a pupils needs to make a phone call, this may be done in the school office.

Parents are permitted to take photographs and videos of school performances, sports days, school outings etc. Any parent who does not wish their child to be filmed or photographed needs to inform the principal.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

The school is committed to playing its part in the prevention of child abuse through its ethos and the curriculum.

We have developed effective links with the local PSNI, Child line and the NSPCC who take part in short teaching programmes with all classes and take regular assemblies.

The Child line number (0800-1111) and the NSPCC number (0800-800500) is displayed around the school and pupils are reminded in assembly, the significance of the numbers.

The school has an effective security system. All visitors must report to the office and sign visitors' book. All entrance doors are closed once all pupils have been admitted and anyone who wishes to get into the school must do so through a buzzer system.

Rigorous systems are in place for arrival and dismissal of pupils
All staff and volunteers are vetted.

The Designated Teacher is responsible for updating Governors, Parents and Staff on the latest legislation.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

The school has a separate policy on educational visits.

REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE POLICY

This policy is reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher and the Board of Governors.

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Appendix

NEGLECT

Definition - Neglect exists where chronic inattention is given to the child by parents or caregivers in areas of medical, educational, stimulative, environmental, nutritional, physical or emotional needs.

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| 1 | <u>Medical Care Neglect</u> | 2 | <u>Educational Neglect</u> |
| | Lack of routine visits
Lack of treatment of illness
No vaccinations
Special needs of child not met | | Non - attendance
Persistent lateness |
| 3 | <u>Stimulative Neglect</u> | 4 | <u>Environmental Neglect</u> |
| | Inadequate or inappropriate
Stimulation | | Unsafe and inadequate
housing
No protection from
dangerous substances
Exposure to violence
eg marital
Whereabouts of child
not known
Unattended
Supervised by young
children |
| 5 | <u>Nutritional Neglect</u> | | |
| | Inadequate feeding
Failure to thrive | | |

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Definition – Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Alerting features: Repeated visits to hospital/surgery
Delay reporting major injury
Apathetic / hostile parents
No explanation for injuries
'Cry for help'

Non – accidental injuries:-

Bruises and skin marks likely to be:

- Frequently patterned eg finger and thumb marks, slap marks or pinch marks
- Bites
- Scratches
- Strap marks
- Bizarre marks

Burns and scalds likely to have:-

- Clear outline
- Splash marks around burn area
- Unusual position
- Indicative shapes, eg cigarette burns, bar of electric fire

Injuries suspicious if:-

- Bite marks
- Fingernail marks
- Large and deep scratches
- Incisions, eg from razor blade.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Definition: Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse

Pre adolescent child (5-11)

Physical Indicators

- Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breast, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs which are not consistent with accidental injury.
- Itching, soreness, discharge or unexplained bleeding.
- Physical damage to genital area or mouth
- Pain on urination
- Abnormal dilation of the urethra, anus or vaginal opening
- Semen in the vagina, anus, external genitalia
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes or evidence of clothing having been removed and replaced (e.g. vest inside out)
- Psychosomatic features such as recurrent abdominal pain or headache

Behavioural Indicators

- An excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters and a precocious knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- A child who behaves in a sexually precocious way
- Extreme fear of bathrooms/showers
- Extreme fear of being alone with men/boys
- Sudden changes in mood
- Regressive behaviour eg sudden onset of bed wetting
- Change in eating patterns; loss of appetite or excessive pre-occupation with food
- Disobedience, attention seeking or restless, aimless behaviour and poor Concentration
- Repeated attempts to run away from home
- Social isolation: the child plays alone and withdraws into a private world
- Inappropriate displays of affection between parent and child who behave like lovers.
- Fear of going to bed and/or overdressing for bed
- Child takes over 'the mother role' in the family whether or not the mother is present

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Definition: - Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse

Physical signs

Stunted growth
Lack of lustre in hair or alopecia
Poor skin
Swollen extremities
Recurrent diarrhoea
Non accidental injury
Chronically dirty, cold or hungry

Behavioural signs

Apathy and dejection
Hyperactivity
Loss of self esteem
Rocking / head banging
Inability to play
Perverted appetite
Indifference to separation from family
Fearful or unhappy

GUIDELINES FOR SELF PROTECTION

1. In the event of injury to a child, ensure that it is recorded and witnessed by another adult
2. keep records of any false allegation a child makes against you or other staff including 'you're always picking on me', to 'you hit me', or comments such as 'don't touch me'.
Keep records of dates and times. Get another adult to witness the allegation, if possible
- 3 if you take children on journeys, always have two along. If it is an overnight trip, always check the rooms in pairs
- 4 Do not spend excessive amount of time alone with one child away from other people. If it is a one-to-one, make sure the door is open. Tell another member of staff if you are going to see a child on your own
- 5 If you are in a holiday or residential setting never, under any circumstances take a child or children into your room
- 6 If you are in a care situation with children with special needs, try to have another person present when changing nappies or clothing or bathing a child.

DISCLOSURE

If a child discloses that he/she has been abused in any way

Five things to say:

- I believe you
- I am glad that you have told me this
- I am sorry that this has happened to you
- It is not, nor ever was your fault
- We are going to do something together about this

Six things to do:

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|----------|---|
| Receive | I will take notes and share responsibility with child |
| Reassure | Encourage them that it's not their fault.
Don't make promises |
| Result | Don't interrogate or ask leading questions |
| Record | Take brief notes when later make more detailed notes eg
diagram of where the bruising is |
| Remember | Remember to follow procedures – CP1 form |
| Relax | Know your limitations. Teacher and designated teacher may
need support |

Suggested Guidelines for recording notes:

- 1 Notes should be written on the presumption that parents can request access to them. Also at case conferences or court cases any records/notes can be made public.
- 2 Note takers personal feelings or reaction to child/family or speculations about their motivations should not be recorded
- 3 Notes should be factual and in neutral language

Why take notes

- Aid to memory – helps the chronological sequence
- Protection for note taker if other party alleges something different agreed during the meeting
- Opportunity for note taker to reflect on meeting, look for the positives and plan for further action
- Protection and information for the school

What to record:-

- What issues were discussed or concerns raised
- What options were suggested
- What was agreed
- What is still in dispute or remains to be resolved
- What action each party is to take
- Referral to other professional person or agency

When:

- During session if all parties are comfortable with that
- As soon after session as possible

When seeking advice on a hypothetical situation from CCMS or Social Services, keep a record of the phone conversation. In particular keep a record of the person you speak to, position held, date and time and advice given.