



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN / CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

2016/2017

Article 3 : The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children

Article 4 : We must do all we can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights

Article 6: Every child has the right to life. We must do all we can to make sure that children survive and develop to their full potential

Article 17: Every child has the right to reliable information from the media. We must protect children from the media. We must help protect children from materials that could harm them

Article 19 : We must do all that we can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse , neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them

Article 33: We must protect pupils from the use of illegal drugs

Article 34: We must protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation

Article 36: We must protect children from all forms of bad treatment

Principal: Mr Mc Namee

Designated Teacher (Primary): Mrs Mc Cotter V. P/ Mrs Sheridan (Nursery)

Deputy Designated Teacher: Mr McNamee (Principal) Mrs McLogan (Nursery)

ST.PAUL'S PRIMARY and NURSERY

Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy Statement

We in St.Paul's School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the children in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff have also adopted the Code of Conduct for our behaviour towards pupils. This Code is set out in the Appendix to this policy statement.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

What is child abuse?

“Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them.” ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures 2005

We use the following definition:

Neglect - the persistent or 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 the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Indicators of neglect include; constant hunger, lack of supervision, inadequate clothing, poor hygiene, untreated illnesses, and persistent tiredness, listlessness, lack of peer relationships, low self esteem, attention seeking and compulsive stealing or begging.

Physical - physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Indicators of physical abuse include: scratches, bite marks, bruises on unusual areas, burns, untreated injuries, self mutilation, chronic runaway, aggressive, withdrawn, fear of going home, undue fear of adults and fearful watchfulness

Sexual - the sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family values.

Indicators of sexual abuse: soreness or bleeding, itching in genital areas, stained underwear, pain on urination, difficulty in walking or sitting, bruises in appropriate places, anorexic or bulimic, chronic depression, inappropriate sexual knowledge or language, low self esteem, afraid of the dark, wariness of being approached, substance abuse, unusual amounts of money or equipment, association with older people or phone contact from unconnected adults.

Emotional - persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

Indicators of emotional abuse: sudden speech disorders, wetting and soiling, signs of self harm, frequent vomiting, rocking, thumb sucking, fear of change, chronic runaway, poor peer relationships, and attention seeking behaviour

Bullying (see also Anti Bullying Policy)

Bullying is a distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. Staff should be vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied, will be fully investigated by the designated teacher for child protection, Mrs Mc Cotter Vice-Principal, Mrs Sheridan (Nursery) or Mr Mc Namee DDT, Principal, Mrs McLogan (Nursery). Team action, (involving Principal, Vice-Principal, Senior Management team members, Year Group Leaders, class teachers, classroom assistants, lunchtime supervisors as appropriate), will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures described below.

Procedures for suspected (or disclosed) child abuse:

The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs Mc Cotter. In her absence Mr.McNamee will assume responsibility for Child Protection matters. In the Nursery setting this will be Mrs Sheridan (DT) and Mrs McLogan (DDT)

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly.

He/she should not investigate – this is a matter for Gateway, Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher in writing, discuss the matter with him/her and make full notes.

The designated teacher, will plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.

ADVICE FOR STAFF

If a child discloses that he/she has been abused it is important to talk/comfort the child as well as tell him/her that you may need to speak to someone else.

IT IS IMPORTANT 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 about this together

IT IS IMPORTANT TO DO:

- Stay calm, listen, and say you will take a few notes (very important as a safeguard for you).
- Do not interrogate; do not ask how, when, where or why?
- Record your notes later again (time, place, date, behaviour of the child, place where the abuse occurred.) If possible do a drawing or description of physical abuse. Follow guidelines immediately.
- Disclosure can leave you traumatized - Remember you need the support.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please remember-do not make a promise of confidentiality to either a child or parent. Always tell them that you may have to disclose the information to another member of staff, i.e. the designated teacher. The child should, however, be

assured that the matter would be disclosed only to people who need to know about it. The principal should obtain a written record from the member of staff who received the information as soon as possible. Proper records, dated and signed should be kept of all complaints or information received and all concerns about possible abuse noted by staff.

The designated teacher will plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.

The designated teacher, in consultation with the principal, will decide, whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to the Social Services. 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.

The designated teacher, may seek clarification or advice and consult with the SEELB's Designated Officer or the Senior Education Welfare Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to the Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the designated teacher will inform:

- The Social Services
- EA's Designated Officer for Child Protection

The Principal in consultation with Mrs McCotter will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. 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.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the CCMS designated officer or Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:

- **The Social Services (Gateway)**
- **the CCMS designated officer for Child Protection**
- **EA Child Protection / Safeguarding Officers**
- **EWO (if appropriate)**

This will be done in an envelope marked as ‘**Confidential – Child Protection**’.

If a complaint about possible abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the Vice-Principal if he is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, Mrs McCotter D.T, must be informed immediately or Mrs Sheridan in the Nursery. She will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child or is unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the designated teacher (Mrs McCotter or Mrs Sheridan- Nursery).

It should be recognised that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However only those who need to know will be told.

A Code of Conduct for all members of staff of St.Paul's School in their dealings with children.(See also: Code of Conduct Policy)

Introduction:

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

Code of Conduct

Private Meeting with Pupils:

Staff should be aware of the dangers, which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access or with the door open.

Where such conditions cannot apply staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.

Where possible another pupil or preferably another adult should be present or nearby during the interview and the school should take measures to facilitate this.

Physical Contact with Pupils:

As a general rule staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.

It is unrealistic and unnecessary however to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.

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. DENI Circular 1999/9, Guidance on the use of Reasonable Force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (NI) Order 1998 (Power of staff to restrain pupils).

Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.

Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.

Any physical contact, which would be likely to be misinterpreted, by the pupil, parents 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 his/her Year Group Leader, member of Senior Management, Vice-Principal or Principal.

Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

Choice/Use of Teaching Materials:

Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives of the choice.

When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials in connection with RSE sex education programmes –I’m Special, You’re Special or education for Love.

If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

Relationships and Attitudes:

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, CCMS, staff should 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. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

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 allegations a child makes against you or other staff including – “you’re always picking on me”, “you hit me”, or comments such as “don’t touch me”.
3. If a child touches you or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way or place, record what happened and tell another adult. As it could be totally innocent, do not make the child feel like a criminal. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable situation. Neither is it a good idea for the child to go on doing this as the next person might take advantage and then say the child instigated it.
4. Do not spend excessive amounts 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. Never do something of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. This includes cleaning bottoms, helping them to get dressed after PE etc, or any other activity that could be misconstrued.
6. Do not go into the toilet alone with children if possible.
7. Be mindful of how and where you touch children. Never pat a child on the bottom.
8. Do not make sexually suggestive comments about a child even in jest.
9. Never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to yourself. If there is an attempted cover-up, you could be implicated in the silence.
10. Ensure that you have the opportunity to discuss your own feelings, if possible, with other members of staff.

The use of Reasonable Force to Restrain or Control Pupils

What might be regarded as constituting reasonable force?

Physical intervention can take a number of forms. It might involve staff:

- Physical interposing between pupils;
- Blocking a pupil’s path;
- Holding;
- Pushing;
- Pulling;
- Leading a pupil by the arm;
- Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back;

Or (In extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is an immediate risk of injury, a member of staff may need to take any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of “reasonable force”, for example, to prevent a pupil hitting someone, or throwing something.

However, staff should never act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury, for example by: holding a pupil round the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the pupil’s ability to breathe;

- Slapping, punching, kicking or using any implement on a pupil;
- Throwing any object at a pupil;
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint;
- Tripping up a pupil;
- Holding or pulling a pupil by the hair or ear;

Conclusion:

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, the professional judgement of staff will be exercised and for the vast majority of members of staff this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If members of staff have any doubts about points about this code of practice or how they should act in particular circumstances they should consult their Year Group Leader, member of the Senior Management Team, Vice-Principal or Principal or representative of their professional organisation.

From time to time it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

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Reviewed Sept 16

