

ST BRIDE'S P.S.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Aims:

1. To promote personal safety by creating an ethos within the school which inhibits the misuse of power, promotes individual empowerment and values, such as, openness, honesty, tolerance, respect and caring for oneself and others
2. Ensure a culture in which the pupils feel confident and secure talking to staff about matters that concern them, knowing that the staff will listen to them and respond appropriately.
3. Treat pupils' and parents' concerns in a confidential manner, whilst recognising that when a pupil is at risk of abuse, confidentiality must be subordinated to safeguarding, and the need to take appropriate action, by informing and involving relevant others in the best interests of the pupil.

In accordance with the Children (NI) Order 1995 and with DENI Circular 99/10 'Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection'

- ◇ The welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions made about him/her
- ◇ **All concerns about the welfare of any child will be followed up by staff in the school**
- ◇ All staff (teaching and non-teaching) will receive training in child protection and be kept up to date with new information regarding child protection.
- ◇ Staff, pupils and parents will be aware of and understand the procedures to be followed in cases of suspected child abuse.
- ◇ Staff, pupils and parents will be aware of the names of the Designated (Miss Joyce) Nursery (Ms Ward) and Deputy Designated Teacher (Mrs Granleese for Child Protection.)
- ◇ Staff will understand the confidential recording system for information about suspicion or disclosure of abuse or complaints against staff.
- ◇ Parents will be informed of the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures and kept up to date with any changes.
- ◇ All pupils and parents will know how to raise a complaint of suspected or possible abuse. Pupils will be informed through lessons and assemblies and parents through the distribution of the policy and/or policy summary.
- ◇ All potential volunteers will be vetted by the Education Authority.

We seek to protect our pupils by taking a preventative approach and:

Helping them to learn about the risks of abuse

Helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others

Helping them to acquire the confidence and skills to keep themselves safe

Keep the school secure

Being vigilant regarding strangers, photographers or anyone acting suspiciously

Responding appropriately to concerns about potential abuse

Implementing the safeguarding elements of the school's ICT Policy specifically online safety.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. **It is everyone's responsibility!**

Adopted by BOG 11th October 2016

Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection.

What is child protection?

Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children who are suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm.

What is Child Abuse?

“Child Abuse occurs when a child is neglected or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them.”

ACPC Regional Policy and Procedure 2005

Types of Abuse

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and on-going information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation¹ is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature. (see section 7)

Child Protection Procedure

(1)

1. Where signs are evident or there has been a disclosure/report staff should respond (they may - at the request of the Designated Teacher- seek clarification discretely from the child and make notes after).
2. Any questions asked should be for the purpose of clarification of the nature of the concern, not for the purpose of investigation.
3. Where there is still concern, a report must be made to the Designated Teacher (Miss Joyce, Ms Ward or DDT Mrs Granleese) and full notes made.
4. The Designated Teacher (Miss Joyce, Ms Ward or DDT Mrs Granleese) must notify the Principal.

5. The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with CCMS or CPSSS.
6. If a referral is necessary the Principal (or DT or DDT) will notify:
Social Service or the Police
The Designated Officer for Child Protection in CCMS/EANI Belfast Office

(2)

1. Where a pupil confides information to a member of staff, the pupil should be reassured and told that the information may need to be shared with others. Notes should be made. No investigation or promise of confidentiality should ever be made (see guidance material)
2. The Procedure at 1.3 is then followed.

(3)

1. Where a pupil confides information of possible abuse outside the school or whether or not the pupil is the subject of the alleged abuse, and where the suspected abuser is not the parent, then the parent may be present while the school is seeking preliminary clarification.
2. The procedure at 1.3 is then followed.

(4)

1. Safeguarding / child protection complaint against a member of the Board of Governors
2. The procedure at 1.3 is then followed

(5)

1. Safeguarding / child protection complaint against a Volunteer
- The procedure at 1.3 is then followed

(6)

1. Safeguarding / child protection complaint against a member of the School's staff
DE Circular 2015/13 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff will be followed in all such circumstances.
2. If the complaint is about the Principal, tell the Designated Teacher (Miss Joyce or DDT Mrs Granleese.)
3. The Designated Teacher (Miss Joyce or DDT Mrs Granleese) must notify the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the EA local CPSSS team.
4. The Chairperson and DT will apply the DE Circular above.
5. If the complaint is about any other adult working in the school, tell the Principal.
6. The Chairperson and Principal will apply the DE Circular above.
7. The Principal will inform the Designated Teacher (Miss Joyce or DDT Mrs Granleese) and the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (except where the DT/DDT is the subject of the allegation.)
8. The DE Circular above is then applied.
9. Following a risk assessment, and advice from CCMS/EANI Belfast Office, a member of staff may be suspended from duty as a precaution, pending investigation by Social Services.
10. The Principal will ensure that proper records, dated and signed, are kept of all complaints or information received.
11. The Principal or Designated Teacher (Miss Joyce or DDT Mrs Granleese) will advise the person who made the complaint, on the outcome of the complaint.

Records will be maintained and set out:

- ◇ The nature of the information
- ◇ The time, date and circumstances
- ◇ Where the concern relates to signs or symptoms of possible abuse, a description of these
- ◇ The Principal or Designated Teacher or DDT will supplement the record with:
 - ◇ ● Details of any advice sought, from whom and when
 - ◇ ● The decision reached as to whether the case should be referred to Social Services and/or the police; and, if so, how, when and by whom this was done
 - ◇ ● Otherwise, reasons for not referring to Social Services
 - ◇ ● The records will be stored confidentially

Note

- ◇ Information should be written on the presumption that parents and relevant professionals can request access to it
- ◇ Note taker's personal feelings and reactions should not be noted
- ◇ Information should be factual, accessible in language and concise.

All staff and volunteers are to be vetted by the appropriate authorities before commencing duties. They also receive an induction in the school child protection and safeguarding systems *before* meeting any pupils.

From April 1st 2008 responsibility for undertaking vetting procedures has been transferred to a new organisation called Access NI. A background check, by the above organisation, will be requested by the school for all prospective employees, volunteers and school governors. From this date all persons joining St. Bride's staff, including volunteers and governors will require an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate.