

Donaghmore Primary School Child Protection Policy

The health, safety and well-being of all our pupils are of paramount importance to the adults who work in this school. Our children have the right to protection regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in school.

This policy ensures that all staff in our school is clear about the actions necessary with regard to reporting a child protection issue/concern.

All actions and decisions taken by the staff follow the detailed guidance set out in the EA(Southern) Child Protection Procedures, DENI Circular 1999/10 Children (NI) Order Guidance and the Regional Area Child Protection Committee Procedures.

Aims

- To raise the awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse which may include neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse or emotional abuse.
- To ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues.
- To lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.
- To lay down correct procedures for vetting and selection of staff and volunteers.

General Principles

The principles and philosophy which underpin our work with children are those set out in the 'UN Convention on Rights of the Child' (UK Agreement in 1991) and enshrined in the Children (NI) Order 1995. In particular the principle we support is that every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and with proper care, by those looking after them, given to their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

The following principles form the basis for effective child protection activity and underpin the guidance which we follow:

- The child or young person's welfare must always be paramount; this over-rides all other considerations. Where a child or young person is disabled or has special needs these must be taken into consideration.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is a conflict, the child or young person's interests must always come first.
- Children have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives. Where a child or young person has a disability, specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters which affect their family.
- Actions taken to protect the child or young person (including investigation) should not in themselves be abusive by causing the child or young person unnecessary distress or further harm.
- Intervention should not deal with the child or young person in isolation; the child or young person's needs should be considered in the context of the family. Agencies' actions must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child or young person's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race, and any special needs.

- Where it is necessary to protect the child or young person from further abuse, alternatives which do not involve moving the child or young person and which minimise disruption of the family should be explored.

All staff has been trained in recognising signs of abuse and the procedures to be followed when something is suspected. All staff adhere to the Code of Conduct, Child Protection, section 5 paragraph 69-72 DENI 99 Pastoral Care.

Procedures

It is important that we work together to protect all our children from abuse and recognise that we have five main responsibilities in the area of Child Protection. These are in areas of prevention, recognition, response, referral and confidentiality/record keeping. Parents will be made aware of these responsibilities and procedures when their child begins school and updated if any changes occur.

1. Prevention

In Donaghmore Primary School we will respect our pupils. The atmosphere within school is one that will encourage all children to do their best. We will provide opportunities that enable children to both take and make decisions. We will aim to create a listening environment that makes it easy for all to share their concerns and encourage values such as openness, honesty, tolerance, respect and caring for oneself and others.

Our teaching of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding as part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum will help to develop appropriate attitudes in our children and make them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We will also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them.

Each year the PSNI will be invited to speak to children about personal safety and saying 'No' to strangers.

The school nurse will be asked to give a talk to P7 children on 'growing up'.

We will deal with drug awareness and misuse of substances through PDMU lessons and by availing of invitations to attend workshops provided by Breakthru Dungannon

Circle time may be used as a strategy to encourage listening and promote self-esteem.

Parents/guardians of new children starting school will be made aware of the school's Child Protection policy and procedures. This may be done during a private meeting with the Principal or during the Primary one induction meeting. When a child is enrolled parents will be asked to complete a Child Protection Record on which they will indicate whether or not they give permission for

- their child to be included in photographs displayed in school and/or published in newspapers,
- their child to be included in videos of school concerts and special activities,
- sticky plasters to be used on their child.

If anyone objects, posters will be displayed at school events asking for photographs/videos not to be taken. A list of children on whom sticky plasters are not to be used, will be kept in the staffroom. Parents will be asked to contact the school if any of the information on the Child Protection Record changes. This Record will be kept in the child's pastoral folder.

All doors in school will be locked, unless manned by an adult, from 9am until all children have left the premises.

Parents are responsible for their own children prior to 9am and if wishing to leave them in school, should ensure they are left with the member of staff supervising at that time.

Parents should not be in school between 9am and 3pm unless they have made a prior appointment with a teacher. Children who arrive in school after 9am will be escorted to their classroom by a member of staff.

Parents will be made aware that children must be collected by an adult if they are required to leave school premises during the school day. They will only be permitted to leave if the parent has made direct verbal contact with a member of teaching staff or has made a request in writing. During registration time class teachers will inform Mrs Watt if permission has been given for a child to leave that day and at what time. Parents collecting children should press the button to the left of the main door and wait in the entrance hall for their child to be brought to them.

All visitors to school will be vetted using the Security system. The monitor is in the principal's classroom and she will decide if a person is to be admitted to the premises. If the principal is absent Mrs Parks will be consulted regarding the admission of visitors. Children will be taught not to open the door even if they know the visitor well.

Individuals entering school for limited periods eg. to make deliveries or visitors for a meeting will not be left unsupervised with children.

Teachers will speak to the children each year about the dangers of choosing to leave the school grounds during the day. Parents will be asked to remind children that they should remain with teachers and supervisors

Pupils will not be allowed to have mobile phones in school although exceptions to this rule can be made through consultation with Mrs Watt.

We will require all adults employed in school to have their application vetted through PSNI records in order to ensure that there is no evidence of offences involving children or abuse. This will also apply to volunteer helpers including parents as volunteers.

Only teachers who are members of the General Teaching Council and on the N. Ireland Substitute Teachers' Register will be appointed as substitute cover.

At least one Governor, but preferably two, will be trained on Child Protection for Recruitment.

2. Recognition

We will use the following definitions for Child Abuse:

Neglect – the persistent or significant neglect of a child or young person, or the failure to protect a child or young person 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 or young person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical – physical injury to a child or young person, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

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 or 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 roles.

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 or young person.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and will not be tolerated in our school. All staff will 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. Please see Anti Bullying Policy.

3. Response

We will have procedures in school that have to be followed if a member of staff, parent or any other adult expresses a concern, or makes a complaint that involves the possible abuse of a child.

- **Staff**

If a member of staff has a concern about a child in school that concern has to be reported to Mrs Parks, who is referred to as the designated teacher. If Mrs Parks is absent, then the concern has to be reported to Mrs Watt, who is the deputy-designated teacher. The member of staff must act promptly and must not investigate the matter any further.

If a child makes a disclosure giving rise to concerns about possible abuse the member of staff will

1. Listen to the child or young person and accept what is said.
2. Record statements.
3. Explain what he/she have to do next and to whom he/she have to talk.
4. Reassure the child or young person he/she have done the right thing to talk about it.
5. Refer information to Mrs Watt or to Mrs Little in her absence.

- **Parent or any other adult**

Parents or any other adults are encouraged to contact the PSNI or Social Services if they think a child may be being abused. If they report the matter to Mrs Watt she will pass on the information to the appropriate authorities including details of how the information was received.

The procedures outlined in the Department of Education Child Protection guidelines will be followed. DENI 99/10 Fig 1.

1. The school may liaise with Social Services (8772 3101) or the Board's Designated Officers for Child Protection to seek clarification or advice. The school will pass on concerns to the Southern Health and Social Services Trust Child Care Team. The school has no choice in this. If a child appears to be at risk, the school has a legal obligation to pass information on, whether it turns out to be true or not. Under no circumstance will any accusation be made against, about or to any person; nor will any language be used that would give a child, parent of guardian any cause for anxiety.
2. The complainant will be informed.
3. If the parent is not the alleged abuser then he/she will be informed.
4. If the parent is the alleged abuser then discussions will follow with Social Services and the PSNI to determine how the parent will be informed. Mrs Watt will generally not be involved at this stage.

If a child alleges abuse in the form of a disclosure then the school is under a legal obligation to contact Social Services following the guidelines laid down by the Department of Education.

Allegations against a Member of Staff

Members of staff and parents can raise a complaint about a member of staff or a volunteer by writing to Mrs Parks who will promptly contact the chairman of the Board of Governors.

Members of staff and parents can raise a complaint about the Principal by writing to Mrs Parks who will inform the chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

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.

Records

We will regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and will treat this accordingly. We will only pass information on to appropriate persons. Any records kept in school will be stored in a non-alphabetic storage system and are exempt from Data-protection requirements. Records will only identify the child by their initials and date of birth. The records will be kept in a separate file away from any other information held about the child.

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a summary will be entered on a Record of Abuse Complaints. This entry will contain details of the complaint and will be made available to the Board of Governors annually.

Case Conferences

Staff will work closely with statutory agencies and will attend case conferences as required. The case conference offers the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff will be expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings held under statutory guidelines.

Code of Conduct

Staff is aware of and adheres to the Code of Conduct which has been drawn up and agreed through Teachers' Negotiating Machinery and the Education Authority (Southern) Code of Conduct for its staff.

Physical Restraint

There may be times when adults in our school, in the course of their duty, use physical intervention to restrain children. The adult involved in any such incident will report this to Mrs Watt immediately and write a report of the incident which will be kept in school.

Staff In-Service Training

The school is committed to on-going in-service training for staff. Each members of staff will receive general training on Policy and Procedures and each will have a copy of this policy. The designated teacher and the deputy designated teacher will receive more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities. All new staff members will receive Child Protection awareness training at induction.

Review

This policy will be updated and reviewed annually or sooner if necessary in light of further guidance and legislation.