

POLICY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Introduction

The Department of Education has issued detailed guidance on dealing with all aspects of child protection, namely DENI circular 1997/4. This circular cancels the previous circular 1989/4 on Child Protection and takes account of the requirements outlined in Children (NI) Order 1995. Regulations and Guidance Vol 6 entailed 'Co-operating to Protect Children'.

Schools should take note of:

Circular 1999/10- Pastoral Care in Schools- provides advice and guidance to schools on their responsibilities in relation to child protection.

Circulars 2006/6,7,8,9,25 – These provide advice and guidance on the vetting of staff and governors, the employment of substitute teachers and recruitment and appointment of staff in schools.

Area Child Protection Committees'- Regional Policy and procedures (2005)- Sets out procedures for all agencies involved in child protection to follow.

Child Protection

Our School Policy on Child Protection should be read in conjunction with the DENI publication – Pastoral Care in Schools – CHILD PROTECTION and relevant documentation from CCMS

This Policy will be reviewed annually and a copy of the Policy sent to parents every two years.

POLICY STATEMENT

We in Holy Trinity Primary School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils 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.

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.

How we will fulfil our Policy Statement

Children are helped to understand the need for “being safe” and ways in which they can help protect themselves.

A representative from the NSPCC will visit the school twice a year to talk to the children about child protection issues and bullying.

Teachers reinforce this through assemblies and circle time.

The school has introduced a very successful Peer Mediation Programme for mornings and lunchtimes in the yard.

An effective anti bullying programme is in place in the school (refer to the Policy on Bullying)

The schools Behaviour Policy, Behaviour codes and positive reward system reinforce good behaviour leading the children to treat others with care and respect.

The school has introduced a RSE programme which is structured throughout each year group. This gives the children the opportunity to develop healthy and respectful relationships and friendships. As well as developing their self esteem and personal development they are able to discuss and foster an understanding of human sexuality and relationships in a moral and social framework. They are able to understand that it is right to say “No” in certain situations.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES TO ENSURE CHILD SAFETY

- 1) School starts at 9.15am but children are permitted to come into school from 8.45am. The Vice Principal is on duty in the yard from 8.30am and a classroom assistant is in the hall to meet children arriving by bus from 8.30am. Children are not permitted to enter the school building without permission before 9.15am. Classroom assistants supervise in the yards from 8.45-9.00am until two teachers come on duty.
- 2) All children are collected from the yard by their class teacher and escorted to the classroom.
- 3) Parents are requested to park in the parents car park and escort their child to the yard. A coded barrier prevents parents from going to the upper part of the school.
- 4) During the school day the children are supervised at all times. During lunch the yards and dinner halls are supervised by SMT and playground supervisors. All have received child protection and playground supervision training (2007).
- 5) Any child injured at lunchtime is sent to the office to a member of staff trained in First Aid, where a school accident report is completed and parents are contacted.
- 6) At the end of the school day P1, P2 and P3 children are collected from their classrooms by an adult. P4-P7 children are escorted to the school gate. Staff will wait with children until they are collected.
- 7) In some cases parents have indicated that only designated adults may collect their child. If this is the case, the office, management, year leader and teacher is informed of this. If a class is split up a list of children and the person who collects them is sent to the assigned class with the children. Staff are aware that in an instance where an unfamiliar adult calls to collect a child, the office and management must be informed immediately. There are two telephones on every floor.
- 8) Some children in P1-P3 attend the after schools club and their parents have signed permission slips, indicating who is authorised to collect them.
- 9) Any child not collected at the appropriate time is brought to the office where parents are contacted.

- 10) If a child has an appointment during the school day, an adult must come to the school to collect them. No pupil is permitted to leave the school premises during the school day without permission of the Principal or Vice Principal.
- 11) The back entrance to the school is closed daily from 9.30-1.30 and the exit doors from the back yard and front yard have been fitted with security bars. Holy Trinity is a very difficult site to secure due to the school layout but staff are aware to be vigilant of strangers on the premises.
- 12) The school has an "Open door" policy and parents may speak to the Principal and Vice Principal about any concerns, family issues etc. Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the school in the best interests of the child.
- 13) Parents and children are aware of the designated teachers in the school.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE- WE USE THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.

This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour

Signs of physical abuse may include:

Bruising

Eye injuries

Burns and scalds

Bite marks

Behavioural Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Self destructive tendencies
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive and withdrawn

- Fear of returning home.
- Reluctant to have physical contact
- Clothing inappropriate to weather- worn to hide a part of the body

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non penetrative acts. They may include non contact activities such as involving children looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Most child victims are sexually abused by someone they know, either a family member or someone well known to them or their family. Both male and female children are abused. Abusers can be men, women or even other children.

INDICATORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Possible physical indicators in the school aged child include:

- Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs
- Itching, soreness, discharge or unexplained bleeding
- Physical damage to genital area or mouth
- Signs of sexually transmitted infections
- Pain on urination
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes or evidence of clothing having been removed and replaced
- Psychosomatic symptoms such as recurrent abdominal pain or headache.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe or persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the child that he/she is worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as he/she meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a

child to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child though it may occur alone.

Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse is as damaging as other, visible, forms of abuse in terms of its impact on the child. An emotionally abused child may be subject to constant criticism and being made a scapegoat, the continuous withholding of approval and affection, severe discipline or a total lack of appropriate boundaries and control.

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Serious emotional reactions, characterised by withdrawal, anxiety,
- Marked behavioural and conduct difficulties eg. Opposition and aggression, stealing, running away, promiscuity, lying
- Persistent relationship difficulties eg. Extreme clinginess, intense separation reaction
- Physical problems such as repeated illnesses, severe eating problems, severe toileting problems
- Extremes of self-stimulatory behaviours, eg. Head banging,
- Very low self-esteem, often unable to accept praise or to trust and lack of self-pride
- Lack of any sense of pleasure in achievement, over-serious.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm.

It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failing to provide a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision .

Neglect is a chronic, persistent problem. In cases of neglect it is important that details about the standard of care of the child are recorded and there is regular inter-agency sharing of this information. It should not only be associated with poverty.

INDICATORS OF NEGLECT

- Unmet medical needs
- Untreated head lice/other infestations
- Frequent attendance at A and E
- Tired or depressed child, including a child who is anaemic or has rickets
- Poor hygiene
- Poor or inappropriate clothing for the time of year

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Role of the Designated Teacher

Responsible for:

- Training all school/support staff
- Discussing concerns with staff and keeping records
- Making referrals to Social Services, PSNI
- Updating his/her own training
- Informing parents of referrals/concerns.
- Supporting the abused child.
- Completing the UNOCINI form as required.
- Liaising with ELB officers for Child Protection.
- Keeping Principal informed
- Keeping staff informed on a “need to know” basis.
- Reporting to the Board Of Governors on a termly basis and providing a full report annually.
- Maintaining the Child Protection Register.
- Notifying CCMS
- Reviewing and updating the Schools Child Protection Policy annually and distributing it to parents every two years.
- Promoting Child Protection ethos within the school
- Attending Child Protection conferences.
- Ensuring staff are trained on and adhere to the “Staff Code of conduct”
- Organising for the vetting of all volunteers and staff in the school.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

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.**

HOW TO RESPOND IF A CHILD MAKES A DISCLOSURE

It is important to remember if a child makes a disclosure to follow the 5 R's:

1. RECEIVE

- Stay calm
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said.

2. REASSURE

- Reassure the child but be careful not to make promises you will not be able to keep i.e I won't tell anyone, everything will be alright now.
- Do not promise confidentiality. All disclosures must be referred. Be honest with the child and tell them what you will have to do with the information.
- Reassure the child.

3. RESPOND

- Respond only in as far as is necessary to determine if it needs referred- do not interrogate or ask the child to repeat their story.
- Do not ask leading questions- e.g "did he/she touch you?". This could impede further investigations.
- Ask open ended questions such as "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?"
- Do not criticise the perpetrator as the child may love them.
- Explain what you have to do next.

4. RECORD

- Make some notes at the time and rite them up fully as soon as possible.

5. REPORT

- Report concerns of possible abuse to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

The Designated Teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made. The Designated Teacher will, if necessary, consult with the ELB designated officers for child protection and seek clarification and advice.

The Principal, in consultation with the Designated Teacher, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social services. **If there are any concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.** This will be done using the UNOCINI form. 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 CCMS's 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 and confidentiality must be breached.**

We will always seek the permission of a parent before making a referral but if necessary we will go ahead without it.

As far as possible we will try to protect the member of staff who raised the concern.

Once a decision is made to make a referral, a phone call is made to Social Services, followed by a UNOCINI form, CCMS are also informed (using the envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION'). If it is a case of sexual abuse, we immediately contact the CARE team with the police.

If a member of staff suspects abuse (a disclosure has not been made), the member of staff should record their suspicions on the schools Child Protection Record Form and discuss their concerns with the designated teacher. They may be asked to keep a record of observations over a period of time.

RECORDING NOTES

It is important that if a member of staff suspect abuse or if a child makes a disclosure, it is essential that detailed notes are kept and the correct forms are completed.

The reason for taking notes is to aid memory and to ensure:

- Protection for staff if other party alleges something different agreed during a meeting.
- Protection and information for the school.
- Notes should be made as soon as possible and during the session if all parties are comfortable with it.
- Notes should be written on the presumption that parents can request access to them.

When making notes it is important to remember;

- Staff's personal feelings, reactions or speculations should not be recorded.
- Notes should be factual and in neutral language.
- Try as far as possible to use the child's own words- if a disclosure has been made.
- Never take photographs- use a diagram.

THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER

Following referral a child may be put on a Child Protection Register. The Designated Teacher will attend all case conferences and inform the Principal and those teachers who have responsibility for that child of any relevant information. Information is on a "need to know" basis. Any concerns about a child on the Register must be reported to the Designated Teacher immediately and they will inform the relevant social worker. The Register will be updated and will be kept in a secure area.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

If a complaint against possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated teacher, if he/she 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 Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher (or his/her deputy, if he/she is not available) must be informed immediately. He/She will inform 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 the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the designated teacher.

It should be noted 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.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

(Staff's Self Protection)

Staff in Holy Trinity have the safety and well being of the children in their care as paramount. Staff must always be aware that they hold a position of trust and their behaviour towards children in their care must be beyond reproach.

This Code of Conduct is intended to assist staff to be aware of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. It is to protect both staff and young people.

1. In the event of an injury to a child, ensure that it is recorded on an accident form and witnessed by another adult. Seek assistance in the event of a serious accident to a pupil in class, after break-time or after lunch-time. Children should not be left unsupervised at any time.
2. Keep records of any false allegations 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”.
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 may 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. Touch should always be in response to a child’s needs- e.g helping a distressed child, comforting a child who is ill, upset, hurt, frightened etc.
4. Touch should not be given to a child who indicates that they are uncomfortable with it, unless it is necessary to protect them, others or property from harm. In such incidents the report on Use of Reasonable Force should be completed.
5. If you take children on journeys, always have two along. If it is an overnight trip, always check the rooms in pairs.

6. Beware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. 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. Where possible, another pupil or adult should be present during an interview.
7. If you are in a holiday or residential setting, never, under any circumstances, take a child or children to your room.
8. Do give firm guidelines on sexually inappropriate behaviour to the child. Explain that the behaviour is unacceptable and could get the child into difficulty, but do not make the child feel guilty. The behaviour may be an imitation of the abuse the child has suffered and is not the child's fault.
9. If you are in a care situation with children with special needs, try to have another present when changing nappies or clothing or bathing a child.
10. Never do something of a personal nature for children that they say they can do for themselves. This includes cleaning bottoms etc., or any activity that could be misconstrued.
11. Do not go into the toilet alone with children, if possible.
12. Be mindful of how and where you touch children. Never pat a child on the bottom. If you work with young children or children with special needs who sit on your lap, get a 'lap cushion' which they can sit on.
13. Be careful of extended hugs and kisses on the mouth from children. This might be particularly relevant to those working with children.
14. When taking children on an outing, think of how you appear to the public – they may misunderstand your actions. It may mean that disruptive pupils cannot go out on outings.

15. If you must physically restrain a child for any reason, be aware that it could be misinterpreted as assault.
16. Do not make sexually suggestive comments or sexually provocative suggestions about/to or within earshot of a child even in jest.
17. Never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to yourself. If there is any attempt to cover-up, you could be implicated by silence.
18. Ensure that you have the opportunity to discuss your own feelings, if possible, with other members of staff.
19. When interviewing a parent or parents (e.g. you may be alone with a parent of the opposite sex) outside of the normal parent/teacher dates, be aware of the possibility that your conduct and behaviour could be misinterpreted.
20. Following any incident (during a parent/teacher interview) where a teacher feels that his/her actions have been misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal.
21. The above procedure should be followed when a teacher feels that the parent/parents actions or conduct have been inappropriate.
22. Please inform the Principal or Vice-Principal of the date, time and location of a parent/teacher interview which occurs outside the normal parent/teacher interview dates.
23. When using the lift, a member of staff must always have more than one child with him/her.

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

The Designated Teacher is responsible for providing all staff with training in the area of child protection. This will include all teaching staff, classroom assistants, secretaries, cleaners, caretakers, dinnerladies etc. All staff received extensive training in February 2007 and this will be updated every two years. Board of Governors have received Child Protection training also.

The Designated Teacher will provide necessary training and the Child Protection Policy to all new members of staff.

Substitute teachers and temporary staff will be provided with the summary Child Protection sheet.

Outside agencies who frequent the school on a regular basis will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy and procedures for Staff Conduct. These will include

- a. Peripatetic teachers
- b. Outreach services- Clarawood, Harberton, St Gerard's, Oakwood etc
- c. School nurse/dentist
- d. Speech/Occupational therapists
- e. Music tutors etc

SCHOOL TRIPS

Staff may seek advice on school trips from the Health and Safety Co-ordinator.

The adult/child ratio in Key Stage One is 1:8 and in Key Stage Two it is 1:10.

Volunteers who accompany children on school trips are vetted.

There should always be two adults on the minibus. Children should wear a seat belt and should sit in the back. Parents complete a permission slip at the beginning of the child's school career which covers all trips.

USING IMAGES OF PUPILS AND STAFF IN SCHOOLS

With the introduction of the Data Protection Act 1998, issues regarding the use of photographs and video images came to the forefront.

Photographs and video images of pupils and staff are classed as personal data under the terms of the Data Protection Act.

Using the images for school publicity requires the consent of the pupils parents or the consent of the staff member.

In Holy Trinity, parents of new pupils are required to complete a consent form giving permission for the school to take and use both still and moving images for school and outside use for the purpose of publicity. These are kept for the seven years that the child is in the school. If a parent does not give permission the Principal should inform the staff of this and it should be dealt with sensitively.

Staff are also asked to complete a form giving their consent for images to be used.

Staff are not permitted to take photographs of the children in unsuitable dress e.g swimming costume.

We try where possible, not to use a child's full name to accompany a caption.

All digital photographs must be securely kept on the Designated Teachers computer.

Staff must not keep images of children on their PC or on their personal Laptop.

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones into school- camera phones or ordinary mobile phones.

REMEMBER: Before taking a photograph

- Obtain consent of the person in the picture or from their parent/carer.
- Tell parents, particularly those new to the school your use of images policy and reasons for it.
- Ensure all children are appropriately dressed.
- Do not take/use images of a child who is considered vulnerable unless parents/carers have given specific written permission.
- Take photographs that represent the diversity of the young people participating.
- Do not use images that are likely to cause distress, upset or embarrassment.
- Avoid images that show a single child with no surrounding context of what they are learning or doing.
- Photographs of 3 or 4 children are more likely to also include their learning context.
- Avoid naming young people. If one name is required use the first name only where possible.
- Be sensitive to cultural beliefs.

- Regularly review stored images and delete unwanted material.
- When a parents consent has been given and the pupil does not wish to be photographed then the pupils wish should be respected
- When a pupils consent has been given and the parent does not wish for the child to be photographed then the parents wish should be respected
- The name and details of a child should not be included on a website as there is a possibility that digital images can be adapted for inappropriate use.
- Inappropriate use of images should be reported in the same way as any other child protection issue

VETTING ARRANGEMENTS

Under the regulations set out in the DENI Circular 2006/6 all adults working with children must be vetted by the police. All adults in schools- staff- teaching and non teaching, volunteers, students etc must complete a vetting form.

- In Holy Trinity vetting forms are distributed by the Designated Teacher. These are then submitted to the BELB Human Resources Department. Once the person has been vetted by police the school is informed and the persons name is placed on the school vetting list. Staff who need an adult to accompany their class on a trip must contact one of the people on the approved vetting list.
- Only teachers on the NISTR register may be booked for subbing.
- Any member of the public or from an organisation working in the After Schools clubs (extended schools programme) must be vetted.
- Tutors holding training sessions for parents- must be vetted.
- All applicants for jobs are asked by the Designated Governor for Child Protection to bring photographic identification with them to interview and are asked if there is any reason why they would not be suitable to work with children.
- Any gaps in employment must be adequately explained.
- At least one member of the Board of Governors recruitment panel must be trained in child protection procedures.

SAFE USE OF THE INTERNET

(REFER TO THE ICT POLICY)

PARENTS / PUPILS

If you have any problems, this is the course of action we recommend.

I have a concern about my / a child's safety

I can talk to the class teacher

If I am still concerned I can talk to (the designated teacher for Child Protection),
Mrs Boyd, Mrs O Shea, Mr White

Principal

If I am still concerned, I can talk/ write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors

At any time, I can talk to a Social Worker (90320840) or the police (90650222)

Useful websites on child protection

- www.deni.gov.uk
- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org
- www.nspcc.org.uk

Useful contacts

- CCMS- Chief Designated Officer for Child Protection- Hollywood Tel: 90426972
- Childline – 08001111
- Kidscape 0207 7303300
- Northern Ireland Anti bullying forum
- Relate Northern Ireland- 0870 2426091
- CARE Units - 90259905
- Duty Social Worker – Cupar Street 90320840

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

RECORD OF CONCERN

Name of Child: _____ Class: _____

Address: _____ Tel: _____

Parent/Carer details: _____

Name of Staff Member: _____ Date: _____

What is said to have happened or what was seen?

When and where did it occur?

Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?

What was said by those involved?

Were there any obvious signs? E.g
bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour?

If necessary please draw a diagram
indicating position, size of injury.

Was the child able to say what happened, if so, how did they describe it?

Who was told about it and when?

Outcome/action taken?(it may be appropriate for the Designated teacher to complete this section.

Signed: _____ (Staff member) Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Designated teacher) Date: _____