

# Child Protection Policy

## Introductory Statement

The staff, parents and management of St. Joseph's Mercy Primary School have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines:

This policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the following areas:-

1. Prevention-curriculum provision
2. Procedures-procedures for dealing with concerns/disclosures
3. Practice-best practice in child protection

An individual copy of this policy document and the appended section from the Department of Education and Science Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures will be made available to all staff.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarize themselves with "Children First" and the DES child protection guidelines and procedures as outlined in Circular 0065/2011.

## Aims

This policy aims to

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment
- Provide a personal safety skills education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in the school
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community
- Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children and staff
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of and familiar with the "Children First" and the DES guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosures of child abuse
- Provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all school staff

## **Prevention:**

The Stay Safe programme is the primary resource used in this school to provide education for children on abuse prevention. The programme is taught as part of the schools' SPHE curriculum under the strand unit Safety and Protection. On enrolment of their child parents will be informed that the Stay Safe programme is in use in the school and a copy of the Stay Safe "A Parent's Guide" provided.

The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every second year in accordance with the SPHE two-year cycle plan at Senior Infants, Second Class, Fourth Class and Fifth Class level.

Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible.

The school will use the Stay Safe pack for children with learning difficulties and this may involve the learning support teacher, resource teacher and special needs assistant.

Parents will be informed of any information nights pertaining to this area.

## **Procedures:**

All staff (Teachers SNAs, ancillary, secretarial, caretaking etc.) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in "Children First" and the Department of Education and Science document, "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools 2011".

See attached Appendix - , pages 2-20 from the Des Guidelines

The Board of Management of this school has appointed Mary Walsh, Principal, as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Evania Holian, Deputy Principal, as the deputy DLP.

The staff and management of this school have agreed:

- All concerns/disclosures involving child protection/child welfare issues will be reported in the first instance to the DLP (deputy DLP where appropriate).
- Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making the report.
- A strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality-information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should be given on a “need to know” basis.

### **Practice:**

The following areas have been considered by the staff and board of management of this school as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and board of management have agreed that the following practices be adopted.

#### *Physical contact:*

Physical contact between school personnel and the child should always be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult. While physical contact may be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child the following should be factors in determining its appropriateness:-

- It is acceptable to the child
- It is open and not secretive
- The age and developmental stage of the child

School personnel should avoid doing anything of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

#### *Visitors/Guest Speakers:*

Visitors/guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The school (Board of Management, Principal, and teachers) has a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use by guests is appropriate. The school has a duty to satisfy itself that no person assisting in the school in any capacity poses a threat to pupils or staff. The school will therefore ask all volunteers assisting in any capacity in the school to fill in the Volunteer Form devised by the CPSMA. (Appendix )

### *Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs:*

In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting/intimate care a meeting will be convened, after enrolment and before the child starts school, between parents/guardians, class teacher, special needs assistant, principal and if appropriate the pupil. The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain the specific needs of the child and to determine how the school can best meet those needs. The staff to be involved in this care will be identified and provision will be made for occasions when the particular staff involved are absent. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file and in BOM records.

Two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care/toileting needs. Any deviation from the agreed procedure will be recorded and notified to the DLP and the parents/guardians.

### *Toileting accidents:*

Clean underwear and suitable clothing will be kept in the school so that if a pupil has an "accident" of this nature they will in the first instance be offered fresh clothing into which they can change. While the child is changing a staff member is to supervise them but does not enter the changing area with the child. The door of this area may remain slightly ajar to aid communication.

If a pupil for whatever reason cannot clean or change themselves and the parents/guardians cannot be contacted the child will be assisted by members of staff familiar to the child. In all such situations two members of staff should be present. A record of all such incidents will be kept and the principal and parents will be notified.

### *Changing for Games/PE/Swimming:*

In general pupils will wear their PE tracksuits to school for PE. Those pupils attending after school sports or playing on school teams are expected to dress and undress themselves independently in the room assigned. Children in Third and Fourth Classes in our school attend swimming lessons each year and are also expected to dress and undress themselves unaided in the changing rooms.

At all times there must be adequate supervision of pupils and those teachers in charge of school teams or supervising swimming groups should ensure children know appropriate behaviour and courtesy when changing.

#### *One –to-One teaching:*

It is the policy in this school that one-to-one-teaching is often in the best interest of the child. Every effort will be made to ensure that this teaching takes place in an open environment. Parents of children who are to be involved in one –to-one teaching will be informed and their agreement sought. Work being carried out by special needs assistants will be carried out under the direction of the class teacher in an open environment.

While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable a full record of the incident should be made and reported to the principal and parents.

Our school seeks to ensure the personal safety education needs of all children with special educational needs in our care. We will use the Stay Safe Personal Safety Skills for Children with Learning Difficulties to supplement the mainstream Stay Safe programme. We will involve learning support and resource teachers to supplement class work. All special needs assistants will be made aware of their vital role in the everyday care of children with special educational needs and will be involved in all staff training on child protection.

#### **Internet Safety:**

Child protection issues in this area are addressed in our school Acceptable Use Policy which is part of our IT policy.

#### **Links to other policy and planning areas:**

Prevention: SPHE curriculum, Strand Unit on “Safety and Protection”,

The School Code of Discipline

Procedures: Anti-Bullying Policy

## Health and Safety Statement

Practice: Guidelines on Swimming and School Tours /Outings

### **Resources:**

The resources used in this school are-

- Stay Safe Programme
- Stay Safe Pack “Personal Safety Skills for Children with Learning Difficulties”

### **Review and Monitoring**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

Policy adopted by the BOM on April 15<sup>th</sup> 2010

It will be reviewed annually at a spring meeting of the Board of Management.

The Board formally adopted and agreed to implement without modification “Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011” at their meeting of February 1<sup>st</sup> 2012