

*St. Teresa's Primary School,
Tullyherron*



*Child Protection and
Safeguarding Policy
2016*

Prepared by: Principal and staff

Discussed with: Whole School Staff Members

Agreed on: 18/02/2016

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INTRODUCTION

The teaching, administrative and ancillary staff of St. Teresa's Primary School, Tullyherron are committed to the following principles which seek to safeguard the children in our care.

1. The child's welfare must always be paramount; this overrides all other considerations;
2. Children should be listened to and taken seriously;
3. A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first.

AIMS

- To provide a secure environment in which the basic rights of each individual are respected, protected and safeguarded.
- To provide a curriculum where self-esteem can be nurtured and children empowered to protect themselves.
- To raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns.
- To provide guidance on recognising and reporting suspected child abuse.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROCEDURES

1. All staff must have an awareness of the issues, which cause children harm, including recognition of the signs and symptoms of child abuse.
2. The Designated Teacher (Mrs. Catherine Kelly) shall be the person with special responsibility for dealing with the overall implementation of the school's child protection policy and the co-ordination of school procedures. The Deputy designated teacher is Mrs Sinead Mc Court(Principal). The nominated members of the Board of Governors responsible for Child Protection. All personnel with responsibility for Child Protection will receive appropriate training.
3. Members of staff who have been informed of abuse by a child or who suspect that a child may have been or is being abused will inform the Designated Teacher immediately.
4. The Designated Teacher will also notify the Principal immediately.
5. If a decision is taken after discussion with the Principal, that there is reason for concern, the school will immediately contact the local Social Services office and later confirm the referral in writing on a UNOCINI Form.
6. The Designated Teacher will also inform the Diocesan Administrator from the CCMS.
7. The Designated Teacher will then inform the Designated Officer for Child Protection, who is the Board's representative for dealing with suspected cases of child abuse, of the school's suspicions and the action that has been taken.
8. Where the suspected abuse is discovered in school by the Education Welfare Officer or the Educational Psychologist, he or she will inform the Designated Teacher and the EASR Designated Officer for Child Protection. The Designated Teacher will inform Social Services.

In all cases of suspected child abuse, the action to be taken by the school is that of informing Social Services and the EASR. The school will NOT be involved in investigating the suspected abuse. The

procedure to be followed has been discussed and agreed by the Board of Governors.

THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILD PROTECTION WILL:

- Ensure that the Area Child Protection Committee's procedures are followed in the school.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff.
- Ensure that the Principal is kept fully informed of any concerns.
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services.
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g. refer to Social Services).
- Liaise with Social Services teams and other agencies over suspected cases of child abuse.
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept in a secure place and marked 'Strictly confidential'.
- Submit reports to, and attend Child Protection Conferences.
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors children who have been identified as 'at risk'.
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A Code of Conduct for all Staff in St. Teresa's Primary School

Introduction

This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within school. 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.

PRIVATE MEETING WITH PUPILS

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Where possible, another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b. There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and re-assurance, which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent, would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen by others present to be, normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.
- c. 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, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (*Power of member of staff to restrain pupils*)).
- d. Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should 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.*
- e. 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 the Principal. This would apply especially in the case where a teacher had been obliged to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury.

RELATIONSHIPS AND ATTITUDES

Teachers should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and gender of the pupil, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.

WORKING WITH PARENTS/CARERS

It is important that our school has an established approach to working with parents. Parents' and children's needs for privacy should be respected. Attitudes to and contact with parents should be non-judgemental in order to obtain the most conducive working relationship. The priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this.

It should be recognised that families from different backgrounds and cultures will have different approaches to child rearing. These differences should be acknowledged and respected provided they do not place the child at risk as defined earlier in the document.

CONCLUSION

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which teachers inter-relate with pupils and where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur. In all circumstances teachers' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of teachers this Code of Conduct confirms, what has always been their practice.

From time to time, however, it is wise for all teachers to review their teaching styles, relationships with pupils and their manner and approach to individual pupils, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of pupils or of their parents.

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

WHO IS AN ABUSER?

A child may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e., a person who while not a parent has actual custody of the child, such as a foster parent, a teacher, or a staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger. However, statistics show that in at least 80% of child abuse cases the offender is known to the victim. Typically, the offender is 'normal' to the outside observer. Most abused children live within a normal two parent/carer home.

The abuse may be the result of a direct act or of a failure to act on the part of a parent to provide proper care and may take a number of forms including:

- **neglect:** the persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including the failure to thrive for reasons that are not clinical or medical e.g. any deterioration in physical appearance or hygiene.
- **physical abuse:** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child.
- **sexual abuse:** the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent. In other words it is the use of children by adults for sexual gratification.
- **Emotional abuse:** the severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment.

The term 'child-abuse' in this guide is intended to cover all these categories, which are not necessarily exhaustive, nor are they mutually exclusive. Abuse seldom falls neatly into one category. In addition to confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect, the application of the child protection procedure also applies to potential and suspected cases of abuse.

THE RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The detection of abuse is often very difficult and seldom clear-cut. Usually detection is like building a jigsaw. This is why it is important to share vague concerns with other professionals such as your school's Designated Teacher, your Education Welfare Officer, but especially the Senior Social Worker for your area.

Teachers see individual children over prolonged periods and can notice physical behavioural indicators, which may be evidence of abuse. No child will demonstrate all signs simultaneously. None of them, individually or in any combination conclusively indicate child abuse. However, such signs are not inconsistent with abuse and where there is no other convincing explanation, the possibility of abuse cannot be ruled out.

PHYSICAL

PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
<p>Unexplained bruises (in various stages of healing) - grip marks on arms, slap marks, human bite marks, welts, bald spots.</p> <p>Unexplained/untreated burns, especially cigarette burns or immersion burns (glove like).</p> <p>Unexplained fractures, lacerations or abrasions.</p> <p>Untreated injuries.</p> <p>Bruising on both sides of the ear; any 'symmetrical' bruising is suspicious.</p> <p>Injuries occurring in a time pattern (e.g. every Monday morning).</p>	<p>Self-destructive tendencies. Aggressive towards other children.</p> <p>Behaviour extremes (i.e. withdrawn or aggressive.)</p> <p>Child appears frightened or cowed in the presence of adults; improbable excuses given to explain injuries.</p> <p>Chronic run away (teenagers)</p> <p>Uncomfortable with physical contact.</p> <p>Arrives at school early or stays late as if afraid to be at home.</p> <p>Clothing inappropriate to weather - worn to hide part of the body.</p>

NEGLECT

PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
<p>Looks extra thin, poorly and sad.</p> <p>Constant hunger; lack of energy; untreated medical problems.</p> <p>Constant tiredness; inappropriate dress; poor hygiene - repeatedly unwashed, smelly.</p> <p>Repeated accidents especially burns.</p>	<p>Tired or listless (falls asleep in class).</p> <p>Steals food; compulsive stealing;</p> <p>Begging from classmates; withdrawn/lacks concentration.</p> <p>Kept away from school medicals; reports that no carer is at home.</p> <p>Low self esteem, persistent non-attendance at school.</p> <p>Exposure to violence, including violent videos.</p>

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
<p>Well below average in height and weight.</p> <p>'Failing to thrive'; poor hair and skin; alopecia; swollen extremities i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet.</p> <p>Recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling; sudden speech disorders.</p>	<p>Apathy and dejection; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.</p> <p>Rocking/head banging; inability to play; perverted appetite.</p> <p>Indifference to separation from family.</p> <p>Indiscriminate attachment.</p>

SEXUAL ABUSE

PHYSICAL INDICATOR	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
<p>Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs. Bruises or bleeding in genital or anal areas. Torn, stained or bloody underclothes. Signs of sexually transmitted infections. Chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches. Difficulty in walking or sitting. Frequent urinary infections; avoidance of lessons especially PE, games, showers. Unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague; anorexia/gross overeating.</p>	<p>What the child tells you; withdrawn; chronic depression. Excessive sexual precociousness; seductiveness; children having knowledge beyond their usual frame of reference e.g. young children describe ejaculation, male masturbation, erection and other details of adult sexuality. Role reversal; overly concerned for siblings. Poor self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence. Peer problems; lack of involvement; massive weight change; suicide attempts (especially adolescents) hysterical/angry outbursts; lack of emotional control.</p> <p>Sudden school difficulties deterioration in schoolwork or behaviour; inappropriate sex play. Repeated attempts to run away from home. Unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's artwork or stories. Vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation, promiscuity.</p>

GUIDANCE ON DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ABUSE

All staff should refer concerns to the designated teacher as soon as possible.

WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD TELLS YOU OF ABUSE

RECEIVE

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Take notes.

REASSURE

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable, for example, don't make promises you may not be able to keep, like 'I'll stay with you' or, 'Everything will be alright now'.
- Don't promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer. Explain to the child that you will need some help to deal with what he has told you.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you should say:
 - 'You're not to blame'.
 - 'You're not alone, you're not the only one this sort of thing has happened to'

REACT

- React to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but don't 'interrogate' for full details.
- Do not ask 'leading questions, for example 'What did he do next?' (this assumes he did) or, 'Did he touch your private parts?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence and the child's in any later prosecution in court.
- Do ask open questions, like, 'Anything else to tell me?' 'Yes?' 'And?'
- Do not criticise the perpetrator; the child may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.

Try to see the matter through yourself and keep in contact with the child. Ensure that if a social Services interview is to follow, that the child has a 'support person' present if the child wishes it, (possibly yourself).

RECORD

- Make some notes at the time on any paper, which comes to hand, and write them up as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy these original notes.
- Record the date, time, places any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words. Any injuries or bruises noticed may be recorded on a diagram showing position and extent.
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or assumptions.

Note down when the suspicions were reported and to whom.

REFER TO THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

If the designated teacher is unavailable, refer to the deputy designated teacher.

RELAX - try to get some support for yourself.

Sources of support include: your Principal, colleagues, the Designated Officer for Child Protection; the local Senior Social Worker and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Teachers carry a unique burden in child abuse cases; that of continuing day to day contact with the child on both a professional and a personal level.

THE DESIGNATED TEACHER'S ROLE

RECEIVE

- Listen to the class teacher or child.
- Remind the class teacher to take notes.
- Take notes.

DISCUSS

Immediately notify the case to the Principal and then refer the case to:

- Senior Social Worker
- Chief Education Welfare Officer
- C.C.M.S.

By phone

And promptly by school Referral Form (UNOCINI)

SUPPORT

- The child.
- The class teacher

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

INFORMAL CONSULTATION

In all cases the Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the appropriate Senior Social Worker before a formal referral is made. Provided that no child is identified by name, the case and its circumstances may be discussed with complete confidentiality and with the full understanding that Social Services cannot be further involved until a formal referral is made.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT - THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCESS

The Designated Teacher of all schools will inform the Designated Officer for Child Protection, EASR and the Senior Social Worker for their area, using School Referral Form (UNOCINI). Phone numbers and addresses may be found in Appendix 1.

A Social Worker will advise the police and consult with appropriate persons whose knowledge of the child and family is relevant. A joint strategy for investigating will be agreed between Social Services and the Police. The purpose of the investigation is to establish the relevant factual circumstances of the child and the possible sources of harm or danger.

INTIMATE PERSONAL CARE

On occasions female staff may be involved in the intimate care of children. Intimate care may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of an individual child. Intimate care can include:

- Washing
- Dressing / undressing
- Toileting
- Menstrual care

Where intimate personal care is delivered this will always be done sensitively and appropriately. Staff will be aware of the need to maintain privacy and dignity when dealing with intimate personal care needs.

The nature of the intimate care required should be clearly understood and recorded. Consent forms will be signed by the parents / carers of the child. Refer to Intimate Care Policy/Procedures.

EMPLOYMENT OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Under DENI Circular 2007/07 substitute teachers will only be employed by the school if they are on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register (NISTR).

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKING OF STAFF IN SCHOOLS

Under DENI Circular 2006/09 all staff or voluntary helpers within our school will be subject to a criminal background check to ensure suitability for access to children.

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES

During your child's life in St Teresa's we may wish to take photographs of activities that involve your child. The photographs may be used for displays, publications and / or a web-site by us, by the EASR or by local newspapers.

Photography or filming will only take place with the permission of the head teacher and under appropriate supervision. When filming or photography is carried out by the news media, children will only be named if there is a particular reason to do so (e.g. they have won a prize) and home addresses will never be given out.

Before taking any photographs of your child we need your permission. A consent form will be sent out to be signed by parents on entry to school.

MOBILE PHONES

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones into school. If you need to make contact with your child this can be done via the school contact number.

APPENDIX 1

Child Protection Support Service for Schools

Designated Officers for Child Protection

Mrs Jennifer McCann/Mrs Cathy McCann
Tullygally Primary School
21 Meadowbrook Road
Lurgan
CRAIGAVON BT605 5AA
TEL: 028 38341975

Counselling for Teaching / Non-teaching Employees of EASR

Staff Care Services
Confidential Care line
TEL: 028 90705533
0500 127079

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

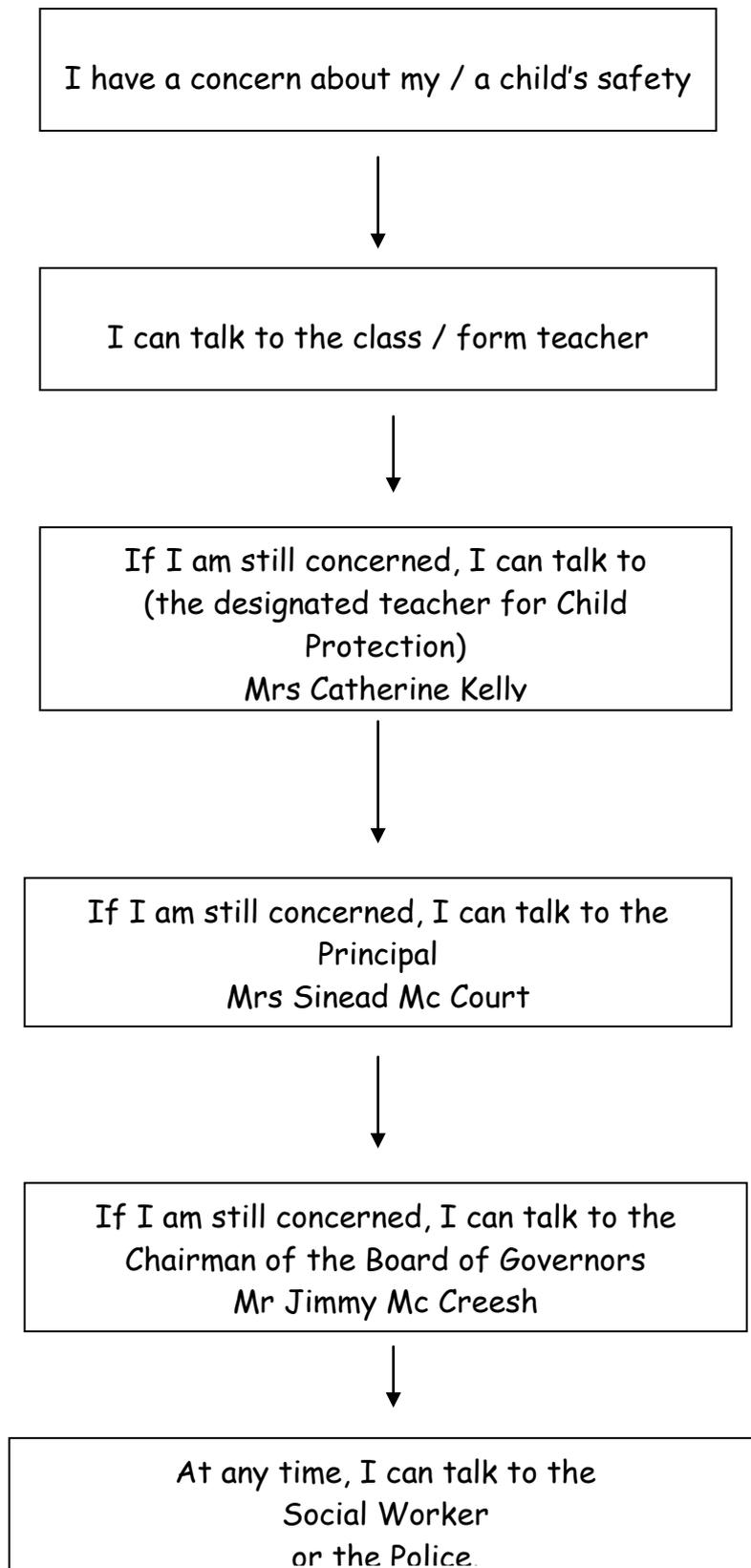
Confidential Staff Welfare Service
Brid O'Neill
TEL: 028 90426972

Welfare Services

Staff Care and Support
Marian Ferguson
TEL: 028 37512559

APPENDIX 1

How a parent can make a complaint



APPENDIX 2

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE IN CATHOLIC MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

