

St. Joseph's N.S. Brackloon

Policy on Child Protection

Introduction:

This Policy is in line with the Child Care Act 1991 – fully implemented in December 1996 (see page 25, 2.2.1).

The Domestic Violence Act 1996 and Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 are also relevant (see pages 25 and 26 of Children First Guidelines). The Child Protection Guidelines issued by the Department of Education will be used.

This policy was reviewed in February 2016.

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 DES guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosure 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 school's 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 'Stay Safe, A Parent's Guide' will be provided to them.

The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every second year in accordance with the SPHE two-year cycle plan. Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible. The LS/RT teacher or SNA will assist in delivering the stay safe programme to the children with SEN if this is deemed necessary. The class teacher will work out these arrangements as appropriate for their pupils.

Procedures:

All staff (teachers, SNAs, ancillary, secretarial, caretaking etc.) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosure as outlined in 'Children First' and the Department of Education and Science document, 'Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures'.

(See attached Appendix, page 5 to 20 from the above DES guidelines).

The Board of Management of this school appointed Brendan Tunney (Principal) as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Eibhlin Geraghty (Deputy Principal) as 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 Designated Liaison person.
- Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making that report.
- A strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality – information regarding concerns or disclosure of abuse should only be given on a 'need to know' basis.
- To ring the Duty Social Worker informally for advice depending on the concern or the nature of the disclosure.

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.

a) Physical Contact:

Physical contact between school personnel and 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 development stage of the child.

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

b) Visitors/Guest Speakers:

Visitors/Guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The Principal and teachers have a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use by guests is appropriate.

c) Extra Curricular Activities

When extracurricular activities outside school hours are organised by the Home School Association it should be ensured that anyone working with the children has Garda clearance. The ratio of adults to children for any out of school activities will be agreed with the school authorities before hand.

d) 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 is absent. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file. Any deviation from the agreed procedure will be recorded and notified to the Deputy Liaison person and parents/guardians.

e) 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. If the 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. A record of all such incidents will be kept and Principal and parents will be notified.

f) 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.

g) Changing for Games/PE/Swimming

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for games/PE/swimming. Where assistance is needed this will be done in the communal areas and with the consent of parents. Only under special circumstances will a member of staff be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required the parent/guardian of the child will be informed and offered the opportunity to come and assist the child themselves if they wish.

At all times there must be adequate supervision of pupils.

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 Principal and parents.

Links to other policy/planning areas:

Prevention: SPHE curriculum, Strand Unit on 'Safety and Protection'.
The school 'Code of Behaviour'.

Procedures: Anti-Bullying Policy
Health and Safety Statement.

Review and Monitoring:

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management every year. The Board of Management will facilitate teachers attending ‘Child Protection’ training where adequate provision for such training is provided by the Department of Education and Skills.

Policy adopted by Board of Management on:

Signed: _____
Chairperson