

Revised Child Protection Policy of St. Joseph's N.S.

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S. has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of this overall child protection policy.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Máire Maguire
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Fidelma O'Hare
4. In its policies, practices and activities, St. Joseph's N.S. will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:
The school will
 - recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
 - fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
 - adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
 - develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
 - fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

5. Content of the Plan

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 (Personal Safety). On enrolment of their child parents will be informed that the Stay Safe programme is in use in this school.

The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every year in accordance with SPHE. These lessons will be adapted where necessary to suit the needs of children with special education needs and/or learning difficulties. In multi-class situations the children may be taught in separate groups, availing of the services of support teachers to facilitate teaching.

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

Procedures

All staff (teaching and non-teaching staff) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in 'Children First' and the DES document 'Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures. See attached outline, Appendix 1.

The Board of Management will appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and a Deputy DLP at the beginning of each school year. See Appendix 2

Practice

The staff and BOM have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and BOM have agreed that the following practices be adopted:

- Physical contact: Physical contact between adults and children will be kept to a minimum e.g. First Aid, and will be conducted in an open area in the presence of another person.
- Visitors/Guest Speakers: The class teacher will always be present at any presentations given by guest speakers in the class room with the exception of the Accord speakers.
- Children with specific toileting / intimate care needs: Where a child has been allocated a special needs assistant he/she will take responsibility for the child's needs and will inform the class teacher or another adult of same. Where no SNA has been appointed parents will be asked to assist in this matter.

- Toileting accidents: at infant level the class teacher will request assistance from another member of staff to see to the child in question. Parents will be informed as soon as possible. With older children parents will be contacted immediately and asked to bring a change of clothes or to take the child home. When a change of clothes has been provided by the school parents are requested to return such items to the school freshly laundered.
- Changing for PE/ Swimming: Children will be supervised in a general way by the teaching staff – at least two teachers per session. No physical contact will take place. In the event of a child being unable to dress him/herself e.g. swimming, the SNA, parents or guardians will be asked to assist.
- Recruitment and staff selection: Teaching staff will be recruited in accordance with the DES regulations. Teachers are vetted by the Teaching Council. Ancillary staff will be vetted through the Garda Vetting Unit prior to employment.
- One-to-one communication between an adult and a child may be necessary from time to time e.g. resource teaching, counselling etc.
- Internet use: An Acceptable Use Policy for both staff and children is in the process of being developed and will be implemented in the coming school year (2009-2010). At present no child is allowed to use the internet unsupervised.
- 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 will be made and reported to the principal and parents.

Prevention:	SPHE curriculum, Strand Unit on ‘Safety and Protection’ Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying Policy, Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall Programme, Supervision Policy,
Procedures:	Code of Behaviour Health and Safety Statement Children First
Practice:	IT Acceptable Use Policy

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

6. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents’ Association (if any) and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

7. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1

Outline of Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures

1. It is incumbent on schools authorities and teachers to adhere to these guidelines

2. Confidentiality

- All information should be shared on a need to know basis – i.e people with a legitimate involvement in dealing with the issue – Teacher, DLP, Chairperson, SNA
- Giving information to those who need to know is not a breach of confidentiality
- The DLP should inform the parents/guardians of the child that a report is being submitted to HSE unless doing so is likely to endanger the child. Reasons for not informing parents should be recorded. (Do not speak to parents alone)
- In the case of an emergency where a child is at serious risk and the HSE is unavailable, contact the Gardai immediately.

3. Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- The DLP deals with the HSE, Gardai and other parties in connection with allegations of abuse
- If the DLP is unavailable another member of staff will act for him/her
- The DLP or her replacement should immediately inform the Chairperson of the BOM that a report involving a pupil has been submitted to the HSE.
- If the allegation of abuse is made against the DLP the Chairperson should be informed immediately. If the Chairperson is unavailable the Bishop's nominee should be informed.

4. Possible signs of abuse. (Grounds for reasonable suspicion)

No one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself.

The HSE should always be notified where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion.

- Specific information from a child that he/she has been abused
- An account by a person who saw a child being abused
- An injury or behaviour consistent both with abuse or an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it is a case of abuse - i.e. a pattern of injuries, dysfunctional behaviour etc.
- Consistent evidence over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not be a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. If doubts persist consult the DLP.

5. Handling disclosures from children

A staff member may be the only person an abused child can trust. Great care must be taken not to damage that trust.

Information given in confidence needs to be responded to with tact and sensitivity. The staff member needs to reassure the child and retain his/her trust while explaining the need for action and the possible consequences, which will involve other adults. Also that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her but do not make promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anyone else.

- Listen to the child
- Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child – clarify do not investigate
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises
- Do not stop a child recalling significant events
- Do not over react
- Explain that further help may have to be sought
- Record the discussion accurately and retain the record – in the child's own words if possible and within 72 hrs.

Inform the DLP – a record of the discussion should be given to and retained by the DLP

6. Keeping track of records

When child abuse is suspected it is essential to have a record of all information available. Staff should note carefully what they have observed and when. Signs of physical injury should be described in detail and if appropriate sketched. Any comment by the child or any other person about how the alleged abuse occurred should be recorded.

Records should be kept by the DLP in a secure place (locked) and registered under a code name.

It is possible that school personnel may subsequently be invited to attend a child protection conference by the HSE.

7. Action taken by DLP

If both staff member and DLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for concern the DLP will make a report to the HSE – by phone or in writing. Speak to the Child Care Manager

In an emergency speak directly to the Gardai – To a senior Garda

When a report is being made inform the Chairperson of the BOM and the parents/guardians if appropriate.

If in doubt seek advice from the HSE making it explicit that you are not making a report.

The name of the child must be given in all cases and a report made to the BOM.

If the DLP decides that a report should not be made the staff member concerned should be given a clear written statement why action is not being taken.

If the staff member is still concerned he/she is free to consult with or make a report to HSE.

Appendix 2

Personnel for the school year 2011-2012

DLP	Máire Maguire	041-9846502
Deputy DLP	Fidelma O Hare	0419826983
Chairperson BOM	Fr. John McAlinden	0419838278
Bishop's Nominee	Eva O'Shaughnessy	0879357321

Appendix 3: Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of its child protection policy and the following checklist shall be used for this purpose.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list.

Individual Boards of Management may wish to include other items in the checklist that are of particular relevance to the school in question.

As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess other school policies, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the school's child protection policy.

Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?
As part of the school's child protection policy, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?
Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?
Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand?
Has the DLP attended available child protection training?
Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?
Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?
Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?
Has the Board ensured that the Department's "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools" are available to all school personnel?
Has the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school's child protection policy to new school personnel?
Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?
Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made to the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP?
Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made?
Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/ An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed?
Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?
Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?
Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), has been provided with the school's child protection policy?