

Marymount National School

Child Protection Policy

Introductory Statement

The staff, parents and management of Marymount NS have developed and agreed this policy in line with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools'.

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

- a) Prevention - curriculum provision
- b) Procedures - for dealing with concerns / disclosures
- c) 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 familiarise themselves with 'Children First' and the DES Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures.

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 among 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 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 the Stay Safe 'A Parent's Guide' will be 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.
- Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible.
- Provision will be made for children in a multiclass situation who are on a different level of the programme cycle.
- The content of the programme will be differentiated where appropriate for children with special needs.

- The Home School Community Liaison officer together with the SPHE co-ordinator will have a role in informing and liaising with the whole school staff and parents on the implementation of the programme.
- The SPHE co-ordinator will organise information meetings for parents as needed.

Procedures:

All staff (teachers, special needs assistant, 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, 'Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures'.

The Board of Management of this school has appointed Ms Maria Torpey as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Mrs Kay McQuaile 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 that report
- A strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality – information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should only 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.

a) 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 it's 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.

b) Visitors / Guest Speakers:

Visitors/guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The school (Principal/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.

c) 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.

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.

d) 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. In all such situations two members of staff should be present. A record of all such incidents will be kept and principal and parents will be notified.

e) 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 a teacher in an open environment.

f) Changing for Games/ PE

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for games/PE. Where assistance is needed this will be done in the communal areas and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/ volunteers 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 asked to assist the child.

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 Discipline

Procedures: Anti-Bullying Policy
Health and Safety Statement

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.

Review approved by Board of Management 22 November 2016