

Summary of Procedures for a Pupil/Teacher Reporting a Safeguarding Incident

Child makes disclosure or teacher has concerns regarding abuse or neglect.

Matter is referred to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Principal informed by Designated Teacher. Plan of action agreed. Referrer advised of plan.

No referral to Social Services/ Parents or Carers informed of concerns.

Referral to Social Services.

School will continue to support and monitor pupil/s as appropriate.
Representative from school will work with other services as part of the safeguarding plan.

This leaflet is intended only as a summary of the main aspects of the School's Child Protection Policy. The full policy document can be obtained from the School Office. An abbreviated version is available in the Student Planner.

Summary of Procedures for Parents/Carers who wish to refer a Safeguarding Concern

The guidance below outlines procedures for parents/carers when raising a concern.

I have a concern about my or a child's safety.

I can talk to the Form Teacher or Head of Year.

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal.

If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman
Tel: 0800 343 424

At any time a parent can talk to a Social Worker at the Gateway Team (Southern Trust)

Tel: 028 3741 5285

or the PSNI at the Public Protection Unit

Tel: 999 (Emergency) or 101(Non-Urgent)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY and PROCEDURES

A SUMMARY

Designated Teachers:

Mrs F.Hartigan

Mrs F. McKeever

Mr R. Mc Cabe

“Our School Child Protection Policy aims to protect and support each child's development in ways which will foster a safeguarding ethos, security, confidence, independence and will be implemented by all personnel in the school.”

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Child Protection is concerned with the provision of a suitable environment for children to develop and mature, safe, as far as possible, from psychological or physical harm.

All members of staff have a duty to help protect children from abuse or the risk of abuse and must be aware of correct procedures to safeguard all those in our care.

Staff see children on a day-to-day basis over long periods of time and are in a unique position to be able to notice physical and behavioural indicators which may be evidence of abuse. We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting safeguarding any concerns raised in a professional manner.

Guiding Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount at all times.
- Every child has a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, members of staff and students will be respected in so far as legal requirements permit.
- Employees and all working with students in Loreto are subject to Enhanced Disclosure Checks by Access N.I.

Designated Teacher

Any member of staff who knows or suspects that a child is being harmed or at risk of being harmed has a duty to convey his/her concern to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to the Principal.

A Safeguarding Team consisting of members of the Board of Governors, the Principal and members of the SMT is also in place, ensuring that safeguarding procedures are adhered to.

Responsibility to Report

Any member of staff who knows or suspects that a pupil is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed, has a duty to convey his/her concern to the Designated Teacher or Principal.

Every possible care is taken to minimise the possibility of mistaken referrals but this cannot be guaranteed. **The consequences of not reporting suspicions if a child has been abused could be far more serious than making a report which proves to be unfounded.**

Categories of Abuse

- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Exploitation- Child Sexual Exploitation

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Detection of abuse is seldom straightforward. None of the indicators, either singly, or in any combination, prove conclusively that a child has been abused.

Physical Abuse - Unexplained marks/injuries; scratches, human bite marks or welts, bruises, burns, untreated injuries; chronic runaway; self-mutilation tendencies; aggressive or withdrawn, fear of returning home.

Neglect - Medical/physical/special needs of child not being met; looks very thin, poorly, sad; constant hunger; steals food; lack of energy; constant tiredness; poor hygiene; inappropriate dress; frequent absenteeism; low self-esteem; repeated accidents.

Emotional Abuse - Sudden speech disorders; wetting and soiling; signs of mutilation; frequent vomiting; poor peer relationships; attention seeking/needling behaviour; fear of change.

Sexual Abuse - Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas; itching in genital areas; stained or bloody underwear; bruises on inner thighs or buttocks; pain on urination; difficulty walking or sitting; eating disorders; low self-esteem; association with older people, outside the usual range of contacts, inappropriate language, sexual knowledge for age group.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse, where young people are exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliation and degrading sexual assaults. Child Sexual Exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

For further information visit the Safeguarding Board N.I. website www.safeguardingni.org

Role of Members of Staff

In the event that a staff member becomes aware or suspects that a child is a victim of child abuse it is important that the response is sensitive and appropriate.

In all cases, staff will act promptly, bringing concerns to the attention of the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher.

In cases where a child makes a disclosure, staff will:

- Listen to what the child says without showing or expressing shock.
- Allow the pupil to tell what has happened in her own words without interrupting or interrogating her.
- Reassure the child that what she has said has been understood and that her interests are paramount.
- Explain the obligation to refer the matter in order to seek help for the child.
- Not give a guarantee of confidentiality.
- Make written notes at the earliest opportunity but not as the pupil talks. Staff will try to write down the actual words used.
- Keep notes factual and securely stored.
- Refer the matter to the Designated Teacher as a matter of urgency.

Who Needs To Know?

It is not always possible to provide teachers with the full details of a child's circumstances. Information is shared in the interest of the pupil's welfare but this is balanced against pupil and parental rights to confidentiality.

Parents will be kept informed of who is notified within school and other agencies, unless doing so would place the child at further risk.

School visitors

All visitors to St.Patrick's College should sign the visitor's book at reception and obtain a school lanyard.

Past pupils should note that they are visitors to the school and should make themselves familiar with our Child Protection Policy which is available on request.