

Saint Vincent De Paul Primary School

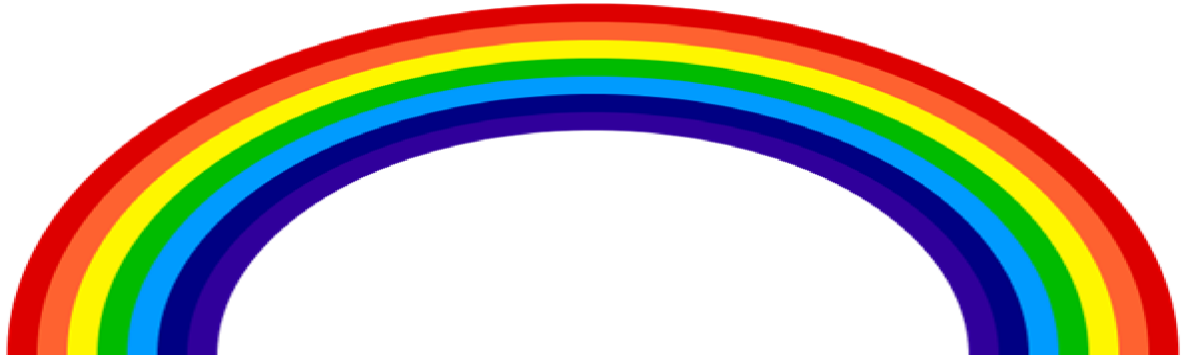


Pastoral Care Policy



We are a Rights Respecting Community who are committed to actively promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Revised June 2016



Our Mission Statement

Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School is committed to working in partnership with our parents to ensure the development of each child's full potential in a climate of support, joy, challenge, co-operation and celebration. We value the realisation that every child born into the world is a new thought of God, an ever fresh and radiant possibility. We are an inclusive school where all are respected and cherished as individuals.

As a Rights Respecting School, our pathway to a successful future is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)



Pastoral Care

We in Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School place a great deal of importance in Pastoral Care and see it as having a central role in everything we do. We see our children as individuals who can grow and develop in a stimulating environment where they are given the opportunities to develop their abilities and talents. The Staff strive to promote a sense of self-respect, self-worth and positive self-esteem within each child.

As a Catholic School we strive to develop in each child a strong sense of the beliefs, morals, values and attitudes of the Catholic faith. We believe in a "Living Catholic Ethos" where children see from the example of others around them how to work and co-operate with others in a spirit of caring and kindness. This is further developed through the Sacraments, pupils' participation in the Church services and regular visits by our parish priest.

We see our school in partnership with the Church, parents and the wider community. It is important for us that parents feel involved and are informed about their child's school life.

Children's' learning is more effective when there is active parental involvement. This is encouraged through information sessions and workshops in curriculum areas such as Literacy and ICT. Parents attend a teacher/parent progress meeting about their child once a year where they are given a report and a chance to discuss it. They are made aware that they can make an appointment to talk over any concerns about their child at any time.

Our children have a sense of belonging to a community with an understanding of what is meant by a responsibility to it. We hope to instill in our pupils a grasp of the way in which members of families, adults and pupils in schools and people in the local community depend on each other and how the community functions at a local level. An awareness of the outside world is developed through pupil involvement with outside agencies ranging from those who work in charities, sports, the arts and the environment. This will be done both inside and outside school.

As a staff we feel it is important that our work fosters self-respect, respect for others and the improvement of relationships between people of different cultural traditions. We aim through this work to develop in children confidence in their own worth, enabling them to accept success and failure and to evaluate their strengths and help them to develop the ability to take responsibility for themselves. In learning to build and manage relationships with others our pupils should become aware of the importance of qualities such as patience, respect, gratitude and tolerance.

Our curriculum provision is broad and balanced with staff employing a range of teaching strategies so that effective learning can take place. A differentiated approach in planning and teaching is vital so that pupils with specific requirements are given the chance to reach their full potential. All children need to feel valued and to encourage positive self-esteem we give children opportunities to become involved in a variety of learning experiences both during school and after school hours. Through our teaching methods, classroom management and positive attitude to building relationships we believe we can help pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of themselves and others as individuals. We aim to build on their strengths and limitations, personal qualities, interests, abilities, skills, potential values, motivation and needs.

We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, in which all our pupils can learn and develop to their full potential.

Aims

We aim to: -

- Raise the awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse.
- Ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues.
- Lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.

Objectives

This policy ensures that everyone who works in our school - teaching or non-teaching staff and anyone who has regular contact with our children, is aware of the procedures to follow in the event of suspected child abuse or neglect of a child.

The child protection dimension of the school involves all pupils and all adults. The school will contribute by:

1. Ensuring all pupils have sufficient knowledge about themselves to be able to understand what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate contact.
2. Enabling children to become aware of strategies, which they may use to protect themselves from possible abusive situations.
3. Developing an on-going programme of personal and social education e.g. CASE and Circle Time
4. Ensuring that all new staff are made aware of Child Protection Procedures on appointment.
5. Making sure that all staff and regular voluntary helpers have undergone security clearance by the police.
6. Ensuring that the designated teachers avail themselves of all opportunities to update their knowledge of Child Protection procedures.
7. Assisting with regular in-service training to maintain a working awareness among staff of Child Protection issues and Child Protection procedures.
8. If a child on a Child Protection Register changes school this information should be passed to the new school and all files destroyed at the original school.

Child Protection Policy

What is Child Abuse?

Types of Abuse

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and on-going information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones - by a child's peers.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, and engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature. Grooming is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (see below), but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse

Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It often involves perpetrator(s) gaining the trust of the child or young person and/or making an emotional connection with the victim in order to facilitate abuse before the abuse begins. This may involve providing money, gifts, drugs and/or alcohol or more basic needs such as food, accommodation or clothing to develop the child's/young person's loyalty to and dependence upon the person(s) doing the grooming. The person(s) carrying out the abuse may differ from those involved in grooming which led to it, although this is not always the case.

NSPCC definition - 'Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age. Many children and young people do not understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

Harmful sexualised behaviours

What is harmful sexualised behaviour?

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Schools support children and young people, through the Personal Development element of the curriculum, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often therefore in a good position to notice behaviours that give cause for concern.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours - these can be defined as 'healthy', 'problematic' or 'harmful'.

Healthy Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- ✓ Mutual
- ✓ Consensual
- ✓ Exploratory and age appropriate
- ✓ Not intended to cause harm
- ✓ Fun / humorous
- ✓ Without power differentials

Healthy sexual behaviour has generally no need for intervention however there may be instances when interventions are applied, for example, it is not appropriate when displayed in school or during school activities. This may therefore be an opportune time for teachers to positively reinforce appropriate behaviour, drawing on the recently issued guidance issued by the Department on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

Problematic Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- ✓ Not age appropriate
- ✓ One off incident of low key touching over clothes
- ✓ Result of peer pressure
- ✓ Spontaneous rather than planned
- ✓ Lacking in other balancing factors e.g. no intent to cause harm, level of understanding, acceptance of responsibility
- ✓ Targeting other children, to irritate and make feel uncomfortable. Often the children are not scared and can feel free to tell someone
- ✓ Concerning to parents / carers, supportive adults
- ✓ Sometimes involving substances which disinhibit behaviours

Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. However, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the Education Authority CPSSS may be required. The CPSSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

Harmful Sexualised Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- Lacks the consent of the victim
- When the perpetrator uses threats or violence (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce or intimidate the victim
- Uses age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases
- Involves inappropriate touching
- Involves sexual behaviour between children - it is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older - particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- Involves a younger child abusing an older child, particularly if they have power over them - for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and schools should refer to their own child protection policy and, seek the support that is available from the CPSSS.

Early therapeutic intervention has a high success rate and few children and young people will continue to engage in harmful sexualised behaviour.

Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) Child Abuse

The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs B McVeigh. In her absence, Mrs M Mc Laughlin will assume responsibility for child protection matters. In the Nursery Unit this role is covered by Miss Dillon.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act promptly.**

He/She should not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services - but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with him/her, and make full notes.

The designated teacher will plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.

The principal as the designated teacher will decide, whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to the Social Services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The principal, as the designated teacher, may seek clarification or advice and consult with the EA'S Designated Officer or the Senior Education Welfare Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to the Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the principal will inform:

- The Social Services
- EA'S Designated Officer for Child Protection

(This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL - CHILD PROTECTION')

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff the principal must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the principal, the designated teacher (or her deputy) must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the designated teacher.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

We require all adults employed or helping in school to have their application vetted through police records in order to ensure that there is no evidence of offences involving children or child abuse.

There may be time when adults in our school, in the course of their duty, use physical intervention to restrain children. The principal requires the adult involved in any such incident to report this to her immediately, and to record it in the interventions book.

All adults in the school receive regular training to raise their awareness of abuse and their knowledge of agreed local child protection procedures.

Monitoring and Review

The Board of Governors are made aware of Child Inspection Procedures and practice in our school. They are given a copy of the schools policy and invited to comment or raise any concerns they have regarding any aspect of it.

Child Abuse

Children may be abused by a parent, sibling or other relative, a carer i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home, and acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of a parent, or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both. The abuse may take a number of forms including:

Physical abuse: physical injury to a child, including poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

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, or that violate the social taboos of family roles. In other words, it is the use of children by adults for sexual gratification.

Emotional abuse: the adverse severe 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.

Grave concern: while strictly not a form of abuse but a category of registration of abuse, this term covers children whose situation do not currently fit any of the four categories above but where social and medical assessments indicate that they are at significant risk of above. These include situations where another child in the household has been harmed or the household contains a known abuser.

School Responsibilities as defined by CCMS

The CCMS considers that whilst the statutory responsibility for the protection of children from abuse rests with the Social Services, it is consistent with the aims and objectives of a Catholic school that all teachers have the duty to help protect children from abuse or the risk of abuse. When teachers see signs, which cause them concern, they may have the opportunity to talk to the child with tact and sympathy. **However, staff should not carry out any investigation or examination of the child.** It is not the responsibility of school staff to undertake investigations or to make enquiries of parents or guardians and in some cases it could be counter productive for them to do so. It is for the Social Services departments to investigate suspected abuse and determine what action to take, including notifying the police.

The staff's responsibility is to immediately make their concerns known to the designated teacher if they have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse means ill treatment or neglect leading to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm. The following illustrations outline indicators of abuse and neglect. These signs are not a checklist; indeed many of them could have other explanations.

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators

Unexplained bruises or burns particularly if they are recurrent.
Human bite marks, welts or bald spots.
Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions.
Untreated injuries.

Behavioural Indicators

Self-destructive tendencies.
Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
Chronic runaway.
Aggressive or withdrawn.
Fear of returning home.
Reluctant to have physical contact.
Clothing inappropriate to weather -
Worn to hide part of the body.

Neglect

Physical Indicators

Constant hunger.
Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene.
Untreated medical problems.
Emaciation/distended stomach.
Constant tiredness.

Behavioural Indicators

Tiredness, listlessness.
Lack of social relationships.
Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging.
Frequently absent or late.
Low self-esteem.

Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators

Sudden speech disorder.
Signs of mutilation.
Signs of solvent abuse, (eg mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness).
Wetting and/or soiling.
Attention seeking behaviour.
Poor peer relationships.

Behavioural Indicators

Neurotic behaviour.
(eg rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking).
Reluctance for parent liaison.
Fear of new situations.
Chronic runaway.
Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat.
Torn, stained or bloody underclothes.
Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches.
Difficulty in walking or sitting.
Frequent urinary or yeast infections.
Vulnerable diseases.
Unexplained pregnancies.

Behavioural Indicators

Be chronically depressed/suicidal.
Inappropriately seductive or precocious.
Sexually explicit language.
Low self-esteem, self-devaluation,
Lack of confidence.
Recurring nightmares, fear of the dark.
Outbursts of hysteria/anger.
Over protective to siblings.

N.B If in doubt speak to someone NOW.

Neglect: the persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development including non-organic failure to thrive.

Definition of Neglect

The actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Six Categories of neglect

Note there are overlaps between categories. Neglect may arise for many different reasons. Most parents do not wish to intentionally neglect their children, but our focus must be on the impact on the pupil.

PHYSICAL

- Poor personal hygiene - hair, clothes, skin.
- Pale or sallow complexion
- Body odours
- Poorly fitting or inadequate clothing or footwear
- Poor standard of hygiene or safety at home
- Inadequate sleeping arrangements
- Lack of stair-gate/fire guard, etc.
- Regular hunger
- Collected from school and/or looked after at home by a range of different people who may be inappropriate carers or lack maturity to keep the child safe
- Problems caused by pets that are uncared for and possibly a risk (sometimes pets seem to be better cared for)
- Exposure to drugs and drug related equipment and/or alcohol
- Exposure to prescription medication (such as anti-depressants)
- Prone to illness and infection

MEDICAL

- Dental and/or medical appointments missed, or never made
- Optical, auditory, speech and language, or other therapy advice not adhered to or appointments missed
- Advice from or request to meet school nurse ignored
- Head lice uncontrolled
- Vaccinations not completed
- Over/under -, administration of prescribed medication
- Poor understanding of medical needs arising from disability

EMOTIONAL

- Lack of concern for the child's feelings
- Never giving praise
- Constant belittling or bullying
- Lack of stimulation
- Inconsistent attention - loving/aggressive
- Failure to understand the other types of neglect affect the child's self-esteem and sense of worth
- No sense of belonging to the family
- Erratic and unpredictable parenting
- Poor attachments
- Threats, rejection or frightening behaviour from parents

EDUCATIONAL

- No lesson equipment or constantly lost
- No PE kit
- Indifference to child's academic performance - never or rarely attend parents' evenings
- No response to requests for meetings or to return telephone calls
- Regular or unexplained and unauthorised absence
- Little support to complete homework
- Home/school contact book never completed/often lost
- Lack of understanding or concern for child's disability of SEN
- Child missing school or unable to concentrate due to caring responsibilities at home
- Permitting regular truancing

NUTRITIONAL

- Regular inadequate/poor-quality lunch
- Unhealthy diet
- Complete absence of exercise
- Concerns about the child's weight - very underweight or very overweight
- Child regularly having to make their own meals (and possibly for siblings) due to the incapacity or unavailability of the parent
- Lack of food or cooking equipment at home

LACK OF SUPERVISION AND GUIDANCE

- Few boundaries at home - no rules to follow
- Child out alone at times/in place inappropriate carers
- Antisocial behaviour and vandalism
- Repeated involvement of police
- Exposure to dangerous people
- Encouraged into crime

Bullying – Child Protection

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is violence, which can be physical, verbal or psychological. It is the exercising of power over another who is powerless to defend him/herself; it can be for a long or short duration. It is intentional, aggressive but never accidental.

Types of bullying to be aware of:

1. **Physical acts:** tripping, kicking (in football games), putting rubbish in school bags, and sending nasty notes.
2. **Threat of physical harm:** "I'll get you after school".
3. **Verbal acts:** name calling/ teasing/ ridiculing.
4. **Extortion:** money / favours.
5. **Isolation:** bullies often have group support. Onlookers can be afraid to tell or interfere because they fear retaliation.

Children who are at risk

There is no typical victim. However, children who are weaker or smaller than their peers, are poor communicators, those with poor social skills, fat, helpless, not good at games are all at risk.

In surveys children have considered playgrounds and toilet areas more threatening than classrooms or travelling to and from school.

This is why we see the importance of our whole school behavioural policy, which is a statement of intent, in relation to behaviour, which enables the school to provide a safe, secure learning environment for all. This ensures consistency in handling behaviours inconsistent with these aims.

Issues around bullying are dealt with in depth in our anti-bullying policy.

A Code of Conduct for Employees within the Education Sector whose work brings them into contact with children / young people.

Introduction

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards young children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. 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.

Code of Conduct

1. Private meetings with pupils

- a. Staff should be aware of the dangers, which may arise from private meetings 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.

2. Physical contact with pupils

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- 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, other 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. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of restraint.
- e. Staff who have to administer first-aid should ensure wherever possible that it 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.** All incidents should be recorded in the Accident Book and an Accident Report Form filled in. A copy of this is sent to the BELB and one retained by the school.
- f. Any physical contact, which would be likely to be misinterpreted, by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- g. 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 Designated Teacher.
- h. If a child has to have clothing changed, this should be done in the presence of two adults.
- i. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in close proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

3. Choice and use of teaching materials

- a. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, including the Internet, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

Within the Pastoral Care Policies within the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Guidelines for Self-Protection

In the event of injury to a child, ensure that it is recorded and witnessed by another adult.

Keep records of any false allegations a child makes against you or other staff including - "you're always picking on me", "you hit me", or comments such as "don't touch me".

If a child touches you or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way or place, record what happened and tell another adult. As it could be totally innocent, do not make the child feel like a criminal. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable situation. Neither is it a good idea for the child to go on doing this as the next person might take advantage and then say the child instigated it.

If you take children on journeys, always have two along. If it is an overnight trip, always check the room in pairs.

Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with one child away from other people. If it is a one-to-one, make sure the door is open. Tell another member of staff if you are going to see a child on your own.

If you are on a holiday or residential setting never, under any circumstances, take a child or children into your room.

Do give firm guidelines on sexually inappropriate behaviour to the child. Explain that the behaviour is unacceptable and could get the child into difficulty, but do not make the child feel guilty. The behaviour may be an imitation of the abuse the child has suffered and is not the child's fault.

If you are in a care situation with children with special needs, try to have another person present when changing nappies or clothing or bathing a child.

Never do something of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. This includes cleaning bottoms etc, or any other activity that could be misconstrued.

Do not go into the toilet alone with children if possible.

Be mindful of how and where you touch children. Never pat a child on the bottom. If you work with young children or children with special needs who sit on your lap, get a 'lap cushion' which they can sit on.

Be careful of extended hugs and kisses on the mouth from children. This might be particularly relevant to those working with special needs. This guideline is important not only for your protection, but for the children as well.

When taking children on an outing, think how you appear to the public - they may misunderstand your actions. It may mean that disruptive children cannot go on outings.

All members of staff should carry identification when on journeys with children.

If you must physically restrain a child for any reason, be aware that it could be misinterpreted as assault.

Do not make sexually suggestive comments about a child even in jest.

Never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to yourself. If there is an attempted cover-up, you could be implicated in the silence.

Ensure that you have the opportunity to discuss your own feelings, if possible, with other members of staff.

Children's right to self-protection.

At Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School we will ensure through the teaching of our Religious Programmes 'Alive O' and *Grow in Love*, and through the use of 'Circle Time' that all children in our school know that they have the right:-

To be safe: We will teach children that everyone has rights, such as the right to breathe, which should not be taken away. Tell children that no one should take away their right to be safe.

To protect their own bodies: Children need to know that their body belongs to them, particularly the private parts covered by their swimsuits.

To say NO: Tell children it's alright to say no to anyone if that person tries to do something to them that they feel is wrong. Most children are taught to listen to and obey adults and older people without question.

To get help against bullies: Bullies usually pick on younger children. Tell children to enlist the help of friends or say no without fighting - and to tell another adult. Bullies are cowards and firm; loud 'no' from a group of children with the threat of adult intervention often puts them off.

In cases of real physical danger, children often have no choice but to surrender to the bully's demands. Sometimes children will fight and get hurt to protect a possession because of the fear of what will happen if they arrive home without it. 'My mum will kill me for letting the bullies take my bike, it cost a lot of money'. Tell children that keeping themselves safe is the most important consideration.

To tell: You must assure children that no matter what happens you will not be angry with them and that you want them to tell you of any incident that frightens them or confused them or makes them unhappy.

To be believed: When children are told to go to an adult for help they need to know they will be believed and supported. This is especially true in the case of sexual abuse, which children rarely lie about. If the child is not believed when he or she tells, the adults may continue for years and result in suffering and guilt for the child.

Not to keep secrets: Teach children that some secrets should not be kept, no matter if they promised not to tell. Child molesters known to the child often say that a kiss or touch is 'our secret'. This confuses the child who has been taught always to keep secrets.

The Role of the Designated Teacher

The Board considers that the ultimate responsibility lies with the Board of Governors and the Principal to ensure that all non-teaching staff are aware of the Board's procedures.

A teacher will be designated in this school with responsibility for:-

- Ensuring that all teaching and non-teaching staff whether full-time, part-time, or temporary are aware of the Board's procedures.
- Co-ordinating action by staff in cases of suspected child abuse and reporting to the appropriate Social Services Officer, CCMS Officer and the Education Authorities Designated Officers.
- Ensuring that the principal, teachers and the school's Education Welfare Officer are kept aware of the children 'Looked After' or on the Child Protection Register.

The name of the Designated Teacher should be forwarded to the Education Authorities Designated Officer.

Liability for Staff

Any teacher or member of staff who complies with Board Procedures in making a report of suspected child abuse is acting within the course of his/her employment and in such circumstances, where he/she has acted in good faith, will receive the full support of the Board and will not be legally or financially liable.

Handling Information

Confidentiality

Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality, which should be clearly understood by all staff. Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies, and, where physical or sexual abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is to be kept secret, it is important that the member of staff should tell the child, sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

In view of this please refer to the following guidelines:-

1. **Don't panic**
2. **Listen**
3. **Believe** and let them know you believe (it has been proved that only a small percentage of children lie about these matters).
4. **Do not interrogate or question.**
5. **Affirm** - whatever feelings the child has.
6. Refer to any information however trivial it may seem to:
(i) Mrs B McVeigh(ii) Mrs M Mc Laughlin (iii) Miss G Dillon
7. Make a written note of anything said.
8. Any such information is **confidential** between you, the child and the teacher to whom it is referred, who will then pass it on to the necessary departments.
9. Five things to **say** to a young person in such a situation:-
 - a. I believe you - (this is important)
 - b. I am glad you came to me.
 - c. I am sorry this has happened to you.
 - d. It is not (and never was) your fault.
 - e. We are going to do something to get help.

Never promise absolute confidentiality.



Recording Disclosures, Concerns and Observations

- ✓ Use the Confidential Incident Form
- ✓ Write using Factual and Neutral Language
- ✓ Recount anything the pupil has said in their own words. Swear words, insults, or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim
- ✓ Think WHEN? WHERE? WHO? WHAT?
- ✓ Include a completed body map if relevant to show any visible injuries.

Role of the Designated Teacher

- ✓ Clarifies the situation and informs the Principal
- ✓
- ✓ Guides decisions taken
- ✓ If referred, how, when, where and by whom. Copy to CPSSS
- ✓ Informs parent where appropriate. If not referred, why not?
- ✓ Record signed and dated
- ✓ Relevant people advised
- ✓ Records maintained in Child Protection records for that child in a secure filing cabinet



PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF SUSPECTED / DISCLOSED CHILD ABUSE IN SCHOOLS

Child makes a disclosure to Teacher or other staff member or a staff member has concerns about a child either as a result of one observation or many over a period of time.

Teacher does not investigate.

MUST ACT PROMPTLY

Teacher refers matter to Designated Teacher, discusses with the Designated Teacher and makes full notes.

Designated Teacher Mrs Margaret Mc Laughlin meets with the Principal Mrs Mc Veigh (in case of the Principal's absence, the Deputy Designated Teachers Mrs Anne Lally or in the Nursery Miss Gemma Dillon) to plan a course of action and to ensure a written record is made.

Principal/ Designated Teacher makes a referral on a UNOCINI form to:-

Social Services and Care Unit, CCMS

Copy of referral to Education Authority Designated Officer. Indicate that it is a Child Protection issue in an envelope marked '**CONFIDENTIAL**'

Supplement by a letter/report if necessary.

**At any time, I can talk to the: Gateway Team -Social Services
02890 507000 (9-5 pm) 02890 565444 (5-9pm) or the
Police 02890 259299 or the CPSSS 02890 564107**

Possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff

The complaint is about possible abuse by someone outside the school

Keep a written record of complaint at all steps

Tell the designated teacher

Tell the Principal

Is a referral necessary, or do doubts remain

Don't know - consult Social Services/Board/CCMS

Yes - refer to Social Services/Police and tell EA/CCMS

NO

Tell complainant

Yes - discuss with Social Services/Police how parent will be informed

Is parent the alleged abuser?

No - tell parent

Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff

The complaint is about possible abuse by a member of staff

It is about someone other than the Principal or designated teacher

Keep a written record at every stage, whether a referral is made or not

It is about the designated teacher

It is about the Principal

The designated teacher is the Principal

Tell the designated teacher

Yes

No

Tell the Principal

Tell the Chairperson of the Board of governors

Tell the Principal

If a referral is necessary, or if doubts remain:

Tell subject of complaint, EA/CCMS,

No - no further action

Seek advice from Board/CCMS/Social Services

Yes

Tell Social Services/Police, Board/CCMS

Consider precautionary suspension/remove from direct contact duties

Instigate disciplinary proceedings

No -but disciplinary action

Suspension to be done by Principal (where not the subject of complaint) or Chairperson of BOG

Seek advice from EA / CCMS

Tell complainant



How a parent can make a complaint

I have a concern about my / a child's safety

I can talk to the class teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to Mrs Mc Veigh
(the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee)
028 90717920



If I am still concerned, I can talk to Mrs Mc
Laughlin the designated teacher and Mrs Lally
the deputy designated teacher for child
protection Or Miss Gemma Dillon the deputy
designated teacher for child protection in the
Nursery

028 90717920



If I am still concerned, I can talk / write to:-
Father Devlin the Chairman of the Board of
Governors



At any time, I can talk to the: Gateway Team -Social Services
02890 507000 (9-5 pm) 02890 565444 (5-9pm) or the
Police 02890 259299 or the CPSSS 02890 564107

Contacts and Help lines
Education Authority Belfast Region: CPSSS HELPLINE:
02890 564107

Designated Officers

Christine Graham
Sean Monaghan
Lorraine O'Neill
Therese Moran

NSPCC

Jennymount Court
North Derby Street
Belfast BT15 3HN
Tel: 028 90 351135

NSPCC Child Protection Help line

24 hours call free -
0800 800500

NI Child line

PO Box 1111
Belfast BT1 7DZ
Tel: 028 90 327773

Contact Youth Counselling Services

2a Ribble Street
Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 1HW
Helpline: 'Youth line' 028 90 456654

Child line UK

Freepost 1111
London N1 0BR
Tel: 0800 1111 (free)

Other useful contacts:

Child Care (NI)

216 Belmont Road
Belfast BT4 2AT
Tel: 028 90 652713

Children's Law Centre

2nd Floor, Philip House
124-137 York Street
Belfast BT15 1AB
Tel: 028 90 245704
Advice Line: 028 90 434242

Youth net

The Warehouse
7 James Street South
Belfast BT2 8BN
Tel: 028 90 331880

Barnardos

Childcare Office
542-544 Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 3HE
Tel: 028 90 672366

Kidscape

2 Grosvenor Gardens
London
SW1W 0DH
Tel: 0171 7303 300

Save the Children

Popper House
15 Richmond Park
Belfast BT10 0HB
Tel: 028 90 431123

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Tel: 0845 600 8000

From 31 March 2008 the following arrangements replaced the C.A.R.E Teams. Each PPU is led by a Detective Inspector.

Public Protection Units (PPUs) consist of 4 teams

- Child Abuse Investigation Unit
- Domestic Abuse Unit
- Sex Offender Management Unit
- Missing and Vulnerable Person Unit

Each Child Abuse Investigation Unit is led by a Detective Sergeant.

To make contact: ring the Police Exchange (0845 600 8000) and ask for the Child Abuse Investigation Unit in your area **OR** use the numbers below

Child Abuse Investigation Units

A District (N&W Belfast)

Tennent Street Police Station

Detective Inspector Mark Mehaffey Tel 0845 600 8000 x28968

Detective Sergeant Bjorn O'Brien Tel 0845 600 8000 x26797

B District (S&E Belfast)

Willowfield Police Station

Detective Inspector Davey Burns Tel 028 90259837

Detective Sergeant Chris Miller Tel 028 90259839

C District (Castlereagh, Carryduff, Dundonald)

Dundonald Police Station

Detective Sergeant Sharon Little (Acting up as DI) x15783

Detective Sergeant Ray Lynas Tel 0845 600 8000 x15827

D District (Lisburn, Antrim, Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus)

Antrim Police Station

Detective Inspector Ruben Black Tel 0845 600 8000 x36603

Detective Sergeant Andrea McBride Tel 0845 600 8000 x36070



Confidential Incident Form

Name of Pupil:	Date of incident:
Teacher/ Assistant in Charge:	
Referred to:	
Details of Incident:	
Next Steps	

Signed:

Date:

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this booklet, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult the principal or a representative of their professional association.

From time to time however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children / young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children / young people or of their parents / guardians.

The work that goes on in our school is extremely important and valuable. We make a difference to these children by providing opportunities for them to achieve in many different ways.

Above all we should embrace it and enjoy it.

This Policy was reviewed in consultation with the Staff of Saint Vincent de Paul in June 2016.

Ratified by The Board Of Governors on:_____

Signed:

Chairperson:_____

Principal:_____