



Code of Conduct and Child Protection Guidance for Staff of Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School

Safe Handling Information

CONFIDENTIALITY IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE WHAT IS OBSERVED OR SAID IN SCHOOL MUST REMAIN IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE AND NOT DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE OUTSIDE SCHOOL.

Aims of our Policy

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.
- Raise the awareness in all staff of their own protection.

Child Protection

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 proven 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:

The Primary School Designated teacher's (i) Mrs. B McVeigh (ii) Mrs. M Mc Laughlin The Pre School Manager (iii) Mrs P Boyle and The Nursery Teacher (iiii) Miss G Dillon

7. Make a written note of anything said.

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.

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.

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', PDMU and through the use of 'Circle Time' and 'Kidscape' 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 swim-suits.

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 a 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 confuses 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 abuse 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.

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.
- 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.

1. Physical contact with pupils (see additional guidance on the changing and toileting of children)

- 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. (Early Years staff, in certain circumstances, may have to lift or restrain a child for the safety of that child or the safety of the other children in the class. Such incidents should always be recorded).
- 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, others 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 SEELB 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 Mrs McVeigh.
- h. If a child has to have clothing changed, this should be done in the presence of two adults. (Pre School, Nursery, P1, P2 and P3 parents will be asked to fill in a consent form in anticipation of such an eventuality. Children above P1 should be encouraged to change themselves. Where, because of individual circumstances, this is impossible, (i.e. because of Special Needs), those particular parents may be asked to sign the consent form. Staff should not do for children what they can do for themselves. All such incidents should be recorded in written form.
- 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.

Reviewed, Shared, agreed and signed September 2014