



Child Protection Policy

Introduction:

This policy was first drafted by the staff of the school at a Staff Meeting in January '06. It was ratified by the Board of Management on 7th February 2006 and is now updated on an annual basis. The Board of Management of DPETNS has adopted the Department of Education and Science Guidelines and Procedures in relation to Child Protection and Welfare (Child First Guidelines). This policy clarifies how our school proposes to implement these guidelines in order to ensure the protection and welfare of all children attending our school.

School Philosophy and ethos:

Children who attend Donabate/Portrane Educate Together National School will be encouraged to reach their full potential mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially, in an atmosphere and environment in which they feel safe, valued and secure and in which respect for self and others is the norm. Our school operates under the direct patronage of Educate Together. The four underlying principles which form our ethos are:

- Co-educational
- Child-centred
- Multi denominational
- Democratically run

Aims:

1. To raise awareness of the concept of child abuse (emotional, physical, sexual and neglect) among all school staff (including teachers, SNA's secretary, caretaker etc)
2. To put in place clear procedures for all school personnel dealing with suspicions and allegations of child abuse.

3. To identify curricular content and resources that contribute to the prevention of child abuse and to enable children to properly deal with abuse if it occurs.
4. To promote and protect the welfare of all the pupils in our care.

Content:

It is the policy of our school to follow the procedures as laid down in *Children First - National Guidance for the protection and Welfare of Children 2011* in any case where we suspect or are alerted to, child abuse, including where a child discloses abuse;

All disclosures will be documented, dated and kept on file by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). All disclosures will be treated in a highly confidential manner.

The Board of Management has appointed the Principal (Maeve Corish) as the Designated Liaison Person in our school to have specific responsibility for child protection. If the DLP decides that it is not necessary to notify the Health Board at this point the person who has made the disclosure may do so him/herself. This procedure is outlined in the Child First Guidelines.

The Deputy Principal (Susan Clarke) has been appointed as Deputy DLP to take the place of the DLP if unavailable. Micheál Garvey has been appointed as Deputy DLP in Susan's absence. The Senior Management Team (Maeve, Susan and Micheál) have all received training re Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures.

In line with DES procedures the Board of Management is given a Child Protection update at each meeting by the Principal.

Roles and responsibilities:

- The Board of Management has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of the pupils of the school.
- The DLP has specific responsibility for Child Protection in the school.
- All staff have a duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect children from harm and to record and monitor any concerns relating to children's well being.
- All staff all have a duty to familiarise themselves with this Child Protection Policy and Child First Guidelines.

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 Donabate/Portrane Educate Together National School has agreed the following child protection policy:

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.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Maeve Corish.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Susan Clarke.

In its policies, practices and activities, Donabate/Portrane Educate Together National School 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.

Procedures and organisational implications:

The procedures for dealing with allegations /suspicions/disclosures of Child Abuse are set down in the Children First Guidelines and will be followed.

If any staff member has a child care concern, they are required to record that concern in the hard backed copy designated to each class. All entries must be signed and dated. Hard Backed copybooks are kept in a locked filing cabinet/drawer.

Supervision:

Every effort will be made to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks and at the beginning and end of the school day. A roster of staff on duty will be drawn up and displayed in the staff room. Teachers will ensure that the children are visible in the schoolyard. They are not to leave the schoolyard without permission or engage with adults outside of the school yard. Children are not permitted to spend break times in the classrooms unsupervised.

Visitors:

All unscheduled visitors to the school are required to check in at the office. Staff on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the schoolyard and will ascertain their intentions. Visitors to our school are not given unsupervised access to children.

Volunteer helpers are required to read the guidelines for Volunteer Helpers and to sign their agreement to abide by these guidelines.

We also have a policy on Guest Speakers to the school.

Bullying:

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying policy. If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive then the matter will be referred to the DLP.

Behaviour:

Children are to be encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and to show respect for themselves and others. Our Positive Behaviour Policy clarifies this.

Toilets:

It is school policy that only one child is permitted to enter the toilet area at a time. Children who need to use the toilet during yard time must seek the permission of a Staff member before leaving the yard.

In the case of an accident -

(A) If a child wets themselves during the day a Staff Member will assist them to change into dry clothes. Before assisting the child the staff member will inform a second staff member and the second person will remain in the room adjoining the toilet area.

(B) It is school policy to call a parent/guardian if a child soils themselves in school and requires intimate care. In the unlikely event of failing to make contact, staff will follow the procedures as for (A) above. All accidents of this nature will be reported to parents/guardians.

Staff Cars:

Children will never be taken alone in staff cars. In the rare occasions that staff member drive children to or from a venue there will always be two adults in the car.

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff:

It is the responsibility of Maeve Corish (Principal) to bring this policy and the Child First Guidelines to the attention of all of the staff working in the school. Child Protection is listed on the Staff Meeting agenda each September. Eimear Cole will assist the Principal to ensure that this is done, Eimear has responsibility for SPHE in the school.

After school classes:

The PTA organise and run after school classes. The Child Protection Policy will be made available to the PTA who undertake the responsibility of ensuring that all teachers and supervisors of After School Classes are aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and agree to operate in accordance with it.

Attendance:

School attendance is monitored carefully.

We will also monitor non attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse. The NEWB will be informed of any concerns relating to a child's attendance. We will issue a letter to parents if their child has missed 15 days. Children who miss 20 days or more will be reported to the NEWB in accordance with legislation.

One-to One Teaching:

Parents will agree in writing if 1-1 teaching is taking place. Where practical children in Learning Support/Resource will be taught in small groups. If there is no window in the classroom door the door to the room will be left open if a teacher is alone with a child.

Intimate Care:

If any child in our school requires intimate care the procedures involved in such care will be agreed in consultation with the pupil, their parents/guardians and any other personnel involved in the care of the pupil, in keeping with best practice and keeping the best interests of the child to the fore and with due consideration to maintaining the child's personal dignity. Such procedures, when agreed will be communicated to all parties involved and recorded.

Curricular Implications:

The Stay Safe Programme will be taught formally in Senior Infants, 2nd and 4th classes and revised in 1st, 3rd, 5th and 6th each year.

The SALT programme and the Walk Tall programme are also taught in the school.

RSE lessons and the Learn Together Programme will also enhance the children's learning regarding personal safety.

Rainbows:

A Rainbow Programme will take place every year to offer support to children who have suffered a bereavement or whose parents are separated.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of the Child Protection Policy is kept in the pigeon hole located outside each classroom door. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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