



Parental Copy of St.Malachy's Primary School

Child Protection Policy

This is an abridged copy of our school's Child Protection Policy. If any parent would like a full copy of the policy please contact the secretary and ask to speak to a member of the child protection team.

Our school Child Protection arrangements are being reviewed and updated this year. Parents will be provided with a copy of the revised Child Protection Policy and the names of the new Safeguarding Team once in place.

Domestic Violence:

It is important to note that changes in Child Protection mean that children witnessing domestic violence are adjudged to have been emotionally abused and we are under a legal obligation to report such matters to Social Services.

Please ensure you read the section regarding the use of children's images in school.

Policy Statement.

The Board of Governors, Principal and Staff of St.Malachy's P.S. have a primary responsibility for the safety, care and welfare of all the children in our charge. We aim to carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy and to provide a safe, supportive and caring environment. We recognize the individuality of all our children and will provide opportunities for them to develop their talents to their full potential. To help protect our pupils we will help them to learn about possible causes of abuse in all its forms and make them aware of unwelcome and undesirable behaviours. We will help them to develop the skills and self confidence that they will need to keep themselves safe.

To help us achieve this aim as effectively as possible all staff has been subject to standard vetting procedures and background police checks. They have all accepted and agreed a code of conduct in relation to their behaviour towards the children.

Staff are given advice and guidance on the proper action to take when abuse or neglect is suspected. Any reason for suspecting abuse in any form will be given due attention and consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in the school and staff are aware that some forms of abuse are also a criminal offence.

The following are definitions of abuse recognized by the Area Child Protection Committee

Abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings. In a family, in an institution or community setting , by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger. There are different forms of abuse and a child may suffer from one or more of them.

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the willful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behavior.

Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he or she is worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as he/she meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems, and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

Neglect:

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional, and /or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm.. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non penetrative acts. They may include non contact activities such as involving a child to look at, or be involved in the production of pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Bullying:

Bullying is deliberate hurtful behaviour which is persistent and repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for the victim to defend him/herself. Bullying can take many forms. It can be

- Physical:** e.g. hitting, spitting, damage to another's belongings etc
- Verbal:** e.g. name calling, threats, phone/text messaging etc
- Indirect:** e.g. excluding form a group, spreading rumours etc

Bullying happens everywhere and the school has a clear policy for dealing with it. We will not tolerate bullying in any form. The staff are vigilant at all times for the possibility of bullying occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both the victim and the bully will be contacted immediately such behaviour is identified. A copy of the schools anti bullying policy will be made available to all parents.

Procedures for Dealing with a Concern about a Child's Safety:

Any complaint by a parent regarding bullying will be fully investigated by the principal, the vice-principal and the designated teacher for child protection (i.e. team action). Any person making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher within 24 hours (or as soon as possible) indicating how the team has handled the complaint and the action to be taken. Sanctions will depend on the seriousness of the complaint.

In accordance with regulations from C.C.M.S. and the Department of Education the school has a designated teacher with special responsibility for child protection. In St. Malachy's P.S. the designated teacher is Mr. D. Flynn and the deputy designated teacher is Mrs. K. McGuigan. The named teacher in the nursery is Mrs. T. Moore.

If you have any concerns about your child's or another child's safety this is the procedure you should follow.

Stage 1: I am concerned about my child's /another's safety.

Stage 2: I can talk to the class teacher about my concerns.

Stage 3: If I am still concerned I can talk to the designated teachers (Mr. Flynn or Mrs. McGuigan 028 90327460)

Stage 4: If I am still concerned I can talk to the principal (Mr D. Flynn 02890327460)

Stage 5: If I am still concerned I can talk to or write to the Chairman of the Board of Governors. (Fr. M. McGinnity – phone school to arrange contact)

At any stage if you are worried or concerned and feel it is necessary you can speak to someone from social services or the police care team. The following phone numbers may be helpful:

Social Services, Lower Crescent:	90244061
Police Care Team:	90259830
Childline:	0800 1111 (free call and not shown on phone bill)
NSPCC:	0800 800500 (free call and not shown on phone bill)

Staff Procedures in the event of Disclosure:

If a child makes a disclosure to any member of staff which gives cause for concern about possible abuse, there will be immediate action following agreed procedures.

Stage 1: The teacher concerned will consult with the designated teacher. Records will be kept about the nature of the concern.

Stage 2: The designated teachers will consult with the principal as a matter of urgency. Together they will look at a plan of action and make written records which will be signed by both. The record will include time, date, nature of concern, proposed action advice sought from others and reasons for either referring or not referring. No decision to refer a

case on to social services or the police will be taken without consulting with the designated officers for child protection at either the BELB or at CCMS. At all times the safety of the child will be our first priority.

Stage 3: Having taken advice from CCMS or the designated officers in the BELB the principal (in consultation with the designated teachers) will decide if social services or the police need to be informed. If there is any concern that the child is at risk social services **must** be informed.

Stage 4: Parents will be informed immediately (unless the parent is the possible abuser)

The staff have been advised to stay calm, to listen to the child and reassure him/her that he/she is in no way to blame, to record and report to the designated teacher and not to investigate. Investigation is the work of social services or the police. They have been told not to ask leading questions and not to promise confidentiality.

Procedures to be followed in the event of a Complaint against a member of Staff:

If you have a complaint about possible abuse in any form against a member of staff you should:

- (a) Inform the principal, who will then inform the Chair of the Board of Governors)
- (b) If the principal is not available ask to speak to the deputy designated teacher (Mrs K.McGuigan) and inform her.
- (c) If the complaint is against the principal the deputy designated teacher (Mrs. McGuigan) must be informed who will then inform the Chair of the Board of Governors (Fr. M. McGinnity) and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If a decision is taken to refer the matter formally to social services or the police, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving contact with children and may be suspended from duty pending investigations.

It is important to note that all complaints will be listened to with care and sensitivity. Both parents and children should be aware that information about possible abuse cannot be fully confidential as the information may need to be passed on to other professionals in the interest of the children's safety. Where there is reason to suspect physical or sexual abuse there is a legal responsibility to share the information. However it should be noted that information will only be disclosed to those who need to know.

Use of Volunteers in School:

Volunteers coming in to help in our school will be subject to standard vetting procedures and police checks consistent with vetting guidelines. We hope that you will appreciate that these are carried out as part of our overall duty to protect the children and are in no way meant to cause offence. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the hard work and generosity of the many parents and other volunteers who help out in so many ways.

The use of Mobile Phones in school

Children are not allowed to use mobile phones in school. Parents are asked to help us in this matter by ensuring that your child does not bring a mobile phone to school. Should you need to contact your child in an emergency during the school day please ring the secretary and she will pass on any necessary information. Should your child need to contact home in an emergency situation he/she will be allowed to use the telephone in the secretary's office.

The use of images/ photographs in school

During the school year your child's image (still/moving) may be recorded whilst participating in school activities such as school trips, sporting occasions, special events etc. These images may be used for display purposes, the school website, or for publications in the press. We feel that this is an important way to let the children know that we value and recognize their achievements. However we also recognize that there are some parents or pupils who for various reasons may not want their images to be taken or used for any school purposes.

The onus is on parents/carers to inform the school if they do not want their child's image to be used. If we do not hear from you about this matter we will assume your silence to be indicative of consent.

The school cannot be held responsible for photographs or video footage taken by parents or members of the public at school events.

Addresses/ Telephone Numbers and Collection of Children.

It is important that we can get in touch with you in the event of a child being sick or any other emergency. Please ensure that the secretary is informed of your current telephone number and address and again at any time during the school year; if either of these change please let us know.

Parents are reminded of the importance of notifying the school about arrangements for the collection of children from school and of any possible changes to these arrangements.