

Child Protection Policy

All staff members are expected to be familiar with the Child Protection Policy, including procedures of reporting concerns to the Sarina Markey or Designated Team members who immediately act on it in accordance with our Procedures for reporting child abuse. All incidents to be reported to Sarina Markey immediately or as soon as possible, unless she is indicated as being involved. Where Sarina Markey is not available all incidents are to be reported to Cherith Wilson the deputy designated officer.

INTRODUCTION

The Management Committee and staff take account of the Requirements of Children (NI) Order 1995, Regulations and Guidance Volume 6 entitled “Co-operating to Protect Children” and the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- There is a commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm, abuse or risk of abuse.
- It is our desire to ensure the child is happy, secure and respected at all times.
- Everyone has a need to be loved and has the need to give love.
- We recognise the sacredness and wholeness of the child.

Child Abuse

Abuse takes a number of forms.

Neglect: the persistent or severe neglect of a child by exposure to any kind of danger or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care which results in impairment to the child's health or development.

Physical Abuse: physical injury deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual Abuse: the involvement of children in sexual activities, which violate the social taboos of family roles and/or are for another person's sexual gratification (adult or another young person). Exposure to pornography is included.

Emotional Abuse: persistent, emotional ill-treatment or rejection which has an adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of the child.

IMPORTANT – Procedures for reporting suspected/disclosed child abuse.

If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, we are obliged to make a referral.

The designated team member may seek clarification or advice by consulting the Gateway Team, before a referral is made. A decision to refer a case to the Gateway Team will be made with thoughtful consideration and on appropriate advice.

The safety of the child is our first priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the designated staff member will inform the Gateway Team.

(This will be done by telephone initially and followed up with a written referral, if appropriate, in an envelope marked: CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION)

Arrangements for reporting abuse in the setting are:

Staff must be alert and vigilant to signs, which may or may not indicate abuse. If there are concerns/or a child makes a disclosure, the member of staff must act promptly.

Child protection is everybody's business - information must be shared in the interest of child's welfare - the right to confidentiality must be respected and information passed through the proper channels.

If concerns arise the staff member should speak to the Designated (Sarina Markeyl)/Deputy Designated (Cherith Wilson) Person for Child Protection – who will immediately act on it.

Procedures for Reporting an Incident of Child Abuse.

The matter will be brought to the attention of the child protection officer in charge (Sarina Markey), if appropriate, as a matter of urgency. A course of action will begin.

A **record of factual information** available must be kept by the adult concerned:

- What is observed
- When it is observed
- What the child said

(It is not the responsibility of the setting to undertake investigations or enquiries)

REMINDER

The staff member should inform a member or members of the designated team for child protection (Sarina Markey or Cherith Wilson) when abuse is suspected from within or outside the club.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR REFERRAL

The member of staff must assume responsibility and must report it to the

Designated Child Protection Officer Sarina Markey (07834543170)

or

Deputy Designated Officer Sarina Markey (07834543170)

who will then make a referral by contacting

Social Services Gateway Team (02871314090) or the

PSNI (08456008000) or the

Early Years Team (02866327734) or the

Out of Hours Regional Social Work Number (02895049999) after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays.

INFORMATION

Relevant information will be kept in a confidential file - marked

Child Protection File

DEALING WITH SUSPECTED OR POTENTIAL ABUSE

- During the traumatic time for the child he/she should be treated as normally as is possible.
- Tactfully and sympathetically, he/she should be told that he/she could speak to a trusted adult within the setting.
- Opportunities should be sought to allow the child to speak if he/she so wishes.

COMPLAINT AGAINST STAFF

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, Sarina Markey must be informed immediately and the matter will be referred to the Gateway Team if necessary. An urgent meeting will be held to determine how the situation should be dealt with pending an investigation of the complaint.

Complaints about Sarina Markey should be referred to the deputy child protection officer Cherith Wilson.

Where the matter is referred to the Gateway Team, the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with children, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the Gateway Team.

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Vetting of Staff

All staff are vetted through the Trust's vetting procedures and cannot take up post until approval has been received in writing from the Trust.

Private meetings with Children

All adults should be aware of the dangers, which may arise from private interviews with individual children. 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. Most rooms have visual access – make sure this is not covered at any time.

When 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 entrance to the room.

Where possible, another child or (preferable) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the after school will take active measures to facilitate this.

Physical contact with Children

As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children.

It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.

- Sit beside and comfort.
- Staff should never touch a pupil who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, or others from harm.

- Physical punishment is illegal in any form as a response to misbehaviour.
- Minimum restraint is used only to ensure safety of child or other children.
- Any physical contact, which would be likely to be misinterpreted, by the child, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Staff who have to administer First Aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this 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.

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 to the Manager.

Relationships and Attitudes

Staff should ensure that their relationships with children are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the children, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all circumstances in which staff interrelate with children, 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 how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult their line manager.

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 staff team member.

It should be noted that information given to member 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.

Staff Development

All staff are made aware of Policy and Procedures in the after school and get training refreshed every 3 years. This training looks at forms of abuse, signs and symptoms, procedures, explanation about what then occurs, effects of abuse for learning and stressing the paramountcy for the child. Staff are also reminded on a regular basis by the manager of the child protection policy of what they should do if they ever suspect abuse.

Evaluation/Monitoring

Designated Team will review policy and procedures regularly. The Designated staff will report to the Board of Management annually. Policy to be reviewed /signed off bi-annually by Management.

Procedure where a Parent/Guardian has concerns in Holy Trinity After
Schools Club

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

I can talk to the Room Leaders

- Amy Richmond
- Lisa Keaveney
- Patrick Gilmurray

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the
Deputy Manager Cherith Wilson (Deputy Child
Protection Officer)

07834543170

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Manager Sarina
Markey (Child Protection Officer)

02866324959

At any time, I can talk to the Gateway Team 028
71314090, Early Years Team 02866327734 or the PSNI

0845 600 8000

Regional Social Services 02895049999 after 5pm,
weekends and bank holidays.