



HOLY TRINITY ENNISKILLEN

Pre-School Child Protection Policy

Policy approved by Board of Governors

Dated

Signed

Review Date

Holy Trinity Pre-School aims to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of the children in our care and to give them the very best start in life. We intend to create an environment where children can feel safe, secure and free from abuse. Any suspicion of abuse will be dealt with promptly and appropriately following the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and procedures.

All staff are committed to following procedures and policies for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children in this setting.

Appropriate training is given to all staff in order to promote awareness of how to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to deal with concerns and disclosures.

INTRODUCTION

Holy Trinity Board of Governors and staff take account of the Requirements of Children (NI) Order 1995, the Department of Education NI guidance 'Pastoral Care in schools- Child Protection' (DENI Circular 99/10 and the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures 2005).

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- It is a child's right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is conflict the child's interest must always come first.
- 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.

Other Relevant Policies

Pastoral Care Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy, Special Education Needs, First Aid/Admin of Medicines, Health and Safety, Intimate Care, E-Safety, Use of Mobile Phone/Cameras.

What is Child Abuse?

'Child 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 institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them.' Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2005).

The procedures outlined in this policy are intended to safeguard children who are at risk of significant harm because of abuse or neglect by a parent, carer or other with duty of care.

Definitions

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. Including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents

Parents can play their part in safeguarding by:

- Telephoning the school about any absences so the preschool is reassured as to the well-being of the child
- Informing preschool staff when anyone other than the previously agreed person is collecting the child after school
- Familiarize themselves with the schools safeguarding policies and procedures
- Reporting to school office when visiting school
- Sharing any concerns that they may have in relation to their child.

Preschool Staff

Staff in the preschool see children on a daily basis and can notice physical, behavioral and emotional indicators and a child may choose to disclose to them allegations of abuse.

Members of staff **must** refer concerns or disclosures to the Designated Person for Child Protection (Miss Lisa Keaveney).

If a member of staff does not feel their concerns are being taken seriously or action to safeguard is not being taken by professionals and the child is considered to be at risk of continuing harm then they should speak to the Principal, Education Authority Child Protection Support Service for Schools or to Western Health and Social Care Trust.

In dealing with disclosures the following guidelines should be followed by staff;

Receive - listen to what the child says without shock or disbelief. Accept what is being said and take notes.

Reassure - remember reassure but don't promise confidentiality.

Respond - respond to the child by reassuring and only ask opened ended question like, Is there anything else? Do not interrogate.

Record - Make notes, date, times, names, and place. Record key phrases/words used, note nonverbal behaviour and any physical injuries. No photographs to be taken.

Report - report to the designated leader. Do not contact parents initially. Designated leader will do that as appropriate.

IMPORTANT - Procedures for reporting suspected/disclosed child abuse.

If concerns arise the staff member should speak to the Designated Officer or in her absence the Deputy Designated Officer for child protection.

If there are concerns that the child may be at risk a referral may be made to the Gateway Team.

The Designated Officer/Leader may seek clarification or advice by consulting the Gateway Team or the Education Authority (Child Protection Officer), before a referral is made. A decision to refer a case to Social Services 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)

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

- (i) What is observed
- (ii) When it is observed
- (iii) What the child said

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

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

Complaints about the Leader should be referred to the Principal. If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated officer - Miss Lisa Keaveney should be informed and she will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Monsignor O'Reilly. The Chairman may be contacted directly by the individual making the complaint.

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/PSNI. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

Vetting of Staff

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

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 leader or principal.

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 Leader.

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.

Staff Development

All staff are made aware of Policy and Procedures in the Pre-school and receive training from EYS /the trust. This training looks at forms of abuse, signs and symptoms, procedures, explanation what then occurs, effects of abuse on learning and stressing that the safety of the child is always paramount.

Evaluation/Monitoring

The Designated Officer will review policy and procedures annually. The Designated Leader will report to the Board of Governors annually. Policy to be reviewed /signed off annually by the Board of Governors.

Procedure where a Parent/Guardian has Concerns Regarding a Child in the
Preschool



