



St. Patrick's Junior School

TENNIS COURT LANE, SKERRIES, CO. DUBLIN.

Principal: Máire Ní Chróinín
Deputy Principal: Ann Bowe

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Child Protection Policy

St. Patrick's Junior School strives to create an atmosphere of love, respect for others, security and trust and to create an atmosphere where all children feel valued. The aim of this policy is to raise awareness of child abuse - emotional, physical, sexual abuse and neglect - among all members of our school community and to put in place clear procedures for all school personnel dealing with suspicions and allegations of child abuse. In addition, the policy seeks to identify curricular content and resources that will contribute to the prevention of child abuse and to assist children in dealing with abuse if it occurs.

Board of Management

The Board of Management (hereinafter referred to as the 'Board') has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of the school's pupils. It is the duty of the Board to arrange for the planning, development and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of an effective Child Protection programme and to ensure that reasonable and appropriate staff training is provided in this area.

In particular the Board shall make available to all members of staff and/or persons working within the school a copy of the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011 Edition) published by the Department of health and Children (hereinafter referred to as the 'Children First Guidelines').

It is the responsibility of all teachers and staff members to familiarise themselves with the Children First Guidelines and in particular **Chapters 2 & 3, Chapter 4.8 and Appendix 1 thereof.**

The Board has for the time being and in accordance with the legislation, appointed the Principal, Máire Ní Chróinín, as Designated Liaison Person (hereinafter referred to as the 'DLP') with specific responsibility for the implementation of child protection policies in the school. Ann Bowe has been appointed deputy DLP. The positions of DLP and Deputy DLP will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Both the Board and the DLP shall follow the investigation, monitoring, reporting and information guidelines and procedures laid down in the Children First Guidelines, cases of allegations or suspicion of child abuse. In the event of the DLP receiving a complaint or suspicion regarding an employee, he/she will immediately inform the chairperson of the Board and seek where appropriate a written statement of the allegation from the person/agency making the allegation. Parents/Guardians may make a statement on behalf of a child.

The DLP will seek advice from TUSLA, the child and family agency, and will take responsibility for reporting as set down in the Children First Guidelines. The employee against whom an allegation has been made will be afforded all fairness and due process in the handling of the complaint in accordance with the Children First Guidelines.

The following is not an exhaustive list of the manner and approach to be adopted, but rather is to be read in conjunction with the Children First Guidelines. It sets out in brief, how allegations or disclosures from children shall be handled by staff members:

- Listen to the child.
- Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child.
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises.
- Do not stop a child recalling significant events.
- Do not over-react.
- Confidentiality should not be assured - explain that further help may have to be sought.
- Record the discussion accurately noting “what, where and when”. Record descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries and explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate.
- Retain the record securely.

The staff member should obtain only necessary relevant facts. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to investigate allegations of abuse. The DLP should then be immediately informed and given relevant records. If the suspected abuser is the DLP then the suspicion and any records should be passed on to the Deputy DLP who will proceed in accordance with the Children First Guidelines.

Staff members should observe and record over time the dates / signs / symptoms / behaviour causing them concern. They should inform the DLP and pass on all records.

The following areas will be addressed during each school year:

Accidents	Attendance
Behaviour	Bullying
Children travelling in staff cars	Communication
Induction of all New Staff	Induction of Pupils
Record Keeping	Supervision
Visitors	Visibility

Accidents

While every precaution will be taken to ensure the safety of children, we realise that accidents will happen. Accidents will be noted in our Incident book and will be addressed under our accident policy as part of Health and Safety assessment and management.

Attendance

School attendance will be monitored as per our attendance policy. With regards to child protection we will pay particular attention to trends in non-attendance. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse.

Behaviour

Children are encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

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.

Children travelling in staff cars

Members of the school staff will not carry children alone in their cars at any time.

Communication

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral Language/RE programmes allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which is hoped will aid the pupil-teacher relationship. If teachers have to communicate with pupils on a one-to-one basis, they will do so where they may clearly be seen by others.

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Children First Guidelines and in particular Chapters 2 & 3, Chapter 4.8 and Appendix 1 thereof.

All teachers are expected to teach the objectives in the SPHE programme.

The Principal has overall responsibility for the mentoring of new teachers and will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives. Mrs. Bowe is responsible for ensuring that new teachers know how to fill in the roll book correctly and for informing the teacher of record keeping procedures within the school.

Induction of Pupils/Parents

- All parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). These rules are briefly stated in the booklet all parents receive when their child enters the school.
- All parents will be informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development e.g. RSE, Walk Tall and SPHE.
- The school booklet which all new parents receive contains a synopsis of the school's enrolment policy, which outlines the procedures parents and children should use when contacting the school if there are absences or concerns of an educational/personal/family matter.
- Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress. Appointments can be made by writing a note in the child's homework journal or by ringing the office.
- All new parents are given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and are asked to sign it to indicate that they agree to be bound by it. The school Anti-Bullying policy is contained in the school booklet.

Record Keeping

Teachers will keep each child's file updated with results of assessments carried out, dates and details of meetings with parents and notes from parents. The records are retained securely. Roll books will be updated daily. Sensitive information regarding children will be shared on a need-to-know basis. All educational files of pupils who no longer attend this school are retained securely as per our Record Keeping Policy.

Supervision

School supervision policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks. A rota will be displayed to cover morning and lunchtime breaks.

See supervision policy for agreed rules around break-times and teacher absences.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the schoolyard. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or gardens where they would not be under adult supervision. They will not be allowed to leave the school yard or to engage with adults who are outside of the school yard.

Visitors

Teachers on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the schoolyard and will ascertain their intentions. All visitors will be supervised in the discharge of their business.

Curriculum

We strive to ensure that our school will be physically and emotionally safe and we will deliver the curricular content of our SPHE programme with a view to giving our children the protective skills of self-esteem and assertiveness. The circle time and bubble time methodologies will be used on a whole school basis. The No-Blame approach will be adopted in our Anti-Bullying policy. Co-operative interpersonal skills will be developed through working in pairs and working in groups. Older children will be encouraged to work positively with conflict, negotiation and consensus building skills developed.

Junior and Senior Infants

Infant teachers will teach content objectives as laid out under the 10 strand units in our SPHE programme. They are

- Self Identity
- Taking care of my body
- Growing and changing
- Safety and protection
- Making decisions
- Myself and my family
- My friends and other people
- Relating to others
- Developing citizenship

After discussion teachers felt that these strand units would enable children to develop assertiveness, body integrity, skills relating to self-care, respect for others, identification of feelings and skills necessary to recognise and tell of abuse.

The SPHE programme will be supported by use of the Alive-O programme and resources from the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes.

1st & 2nd classes

Implementing the SPHE programme as laid out under the 10 strand units named above will enable the children to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes pertaining to self-esteem, esteem for others and the environment and skills pertaining to self-care and disclosure. Healthy eating, positive attitudes to drug use and anti-bullying awareness will be introduced.

The SPHE programme will be supported by using the Walk Tall resources, our Alive-O programme, North Western Health Board materials and the Stay Safe programme.

Success Criteria

We will endeavour to ensure the success of this policy using the following criteria:

- Delivery and participation by all staff in training
- Availability of the “Children First” Guidelines to all teachers
- Knowledge of all staff members of the contents of the “Children First” Guidelines
- Full delivery of the SPHE curriculum
- Provision of resources to support the delivery of SPHE
- Delivery of the Stay Safe Programme by teachers and participation in this programme by children.
- Assessment of these procedures by participants following a child protection case
- Feedback from all staff

At the first staff meeting of every year the DLP will remind all teachers of the guidelines. Copies of Chapter 2 & 3, Chapter 4.8 & Appendix 1 of The “Children First” Guidelines and/or any amending guidelines or legislation will be given to all staff members. All staff members will sign to declare that they have read and understand the relevant sections of the “Children First” guidelines and will follow the procedures outlines therein.

Timeframe for Implementation

These procedures will be implemented following ratification by the BOM.

Timeframe for Review

This policy will be reviewed at the beginning of every school year or more often if circumstances warrant.

Responsibility for Review

Responsibility for review lies with the Board in consultation with the DLP.

Notification

Parents will be notified of the terms of this policy within a period of one month of its implementation by the Board and a copy of the Children First Guidelines will be made available on request.

Signed: Richard Hyland,
Máire Ní Chróinín,
Ann Bowe,

Chairperson
D.L.P
D.D.L.P.