Drumnamoe Nursery

School



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Next Review: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Chairperson): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction**

In Drumnamoe Nursery School the welfare of the child is of paramount importance. It is vital therefore that we co-operate fully at all times with parents/ guardians and other agencies to ensure that the child’s fundamental rights i.e. the right to be safe from harm, and the right to have proper care given to their physical and emotional needs, is being met. As stated in the United Nation Convention (1991), all children should have the right to:

“Be protected from all forms of physical, or mental violence,

injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or

exploitation including sexual abuse by those looking after them.”

As a staff, we have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care, and we are prepared to take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved during their time spent with us. Safeguarding is more than Child Protection. Safe-guarding begins with preventative education and activities which enable children to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and well- being is promoted. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection, which refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.

The **Designated Teacher** for Child Protection is **Mrs Emma McDonald**, Principal of Drumnamoe. She has specific responsibility to ensure that Child Protection matters are dealt with (all staff members are aware of this and are kept informed about procedures). In the event of the Principal’s absence, **Mrs Karen Rafferty** or **Miss Laura Murray**, the **deputy designated teachers** will assume responsibility.

**Principles**

The general principles, which underpin our work, are those set out in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child and are enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) order 1995, the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) guidance “Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection” (DENI Circular 99/10) and the Area Child Protection Committees Regional Policy and Procedures (2005), Safe guarding Vulnerable Groups [ NI order 2007 Sexual Offences [ Northern Ireland ]Order 2008 and The Safeguarding Board [ N I ] Act 2011

The following principles form the basis of our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:

* It is a child’s right to feel safe at all times, to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
* We have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in our care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved
* In any incident the child’s welfare must be paramount, this overrides all other considerations
* A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/ guardians and families; but where there is conflict the child’s interest must always come first.
* Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, information should be shared and there should be effective collaboration and understanding between families, agencies, individuals and professionals.

**Definition of Child Abuse**

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from the Area Child Protection Committees Regional Policy and Procedures 2005.

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

**Neglect** 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. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

**Physical Abuse** is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful 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 behaviour.

**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 is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued less in so far as he meets the needs of the other person. It may involve causing a child to frequently 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 abuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child 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 children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Sexual Exploitation** is another form of sexual abuse.It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce and manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim wants or needs and/ or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

**Bullying**

All staff are vigilant to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it. Bullying can take many forms from name calling to sustained physical and emotional abuse. The following procedures will be used:

1. Identify the behaviour, investigate the incident and reassure the victim of the bully.
2. Record the incident in the book.
3. Follow the procedures in the Behaviour Management Policy.

**It is a statutory duty of the Board of Governors to ensure that a record is kept of all incidents of bullying behaviour or alleged bullying behaviours involving a child in Drumnamoe Nursery School.**

**Related Policies**

Safeguarding our children should permeate every aspect of school life. Policies relating to this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy include:

* Anti Bullying Policy
* Behaviour Management Policy
* Pastoral Care Policy
* Special Educational Needs Policy
* Risk Assessment Policy (Including School Trips)
* First Aid/ Medication Policy
* Health and Safety Policy
* Mobile Phone / E Safety Policy
* Intimate Care Policy

It is important to note too that staff have discussed the contents of a RSE [Relationship and Sexuality Policy]. Whilst aspects of this may be deemed appropriate for Health and Social Care / Childcare Students, who fulfil placement duties here, it is not deemed appropriate to write a full policy for the children in Drumnamoe Nursery School, due to their age. Instead the school will focus on developing the skills, attitudes and values necessary to deal with future challenges, teaching the children self- respect and building up their self -esteem.

***All of the above policies are available to parents on request at any time and are available on our school website.***

**Aims**

**Our Aims are to:**

* + Promote the general welfare, health and full development of children, and to protect them from harm.
  + Recognise that children have rights as individuals and to treat them with dignity and respect.
  + Ensure that everyone working in the nursery is aware of the procedures in responding to accidents and suspected incidents of abuse.
  + Establish links with parents/ guardians and other relevant agencies, forging strong partnerships for the good of the child.

In carrying out the above aims it is important that all staff members are aware of all of the possible signs and symptoms.

Neglect: Constant tiredness

Personal hygiene issues

Care concerns about hunger, clothing, supervision

Failure/ delay in seeking medical attention

Physical Abuse: Implausible/ no explanations for injuries

Significant bruising/ marking

Reluctance to go home

Self-destruction tendencies/ Risky Behaviours

Fear of physical contact/ shrining back

Sexual Abuse: Isolation, overly protective of siblings

Inappropriate sexualised behaviour and language

Physical Injuries

Reluctance to go home

Promiscuity/ risky behaviours

Emotional Abuse: Over-reaction to mistakes

Unable to accept praise

Development delay

Fear of new situations, isolated

Self-destructive tendencies/ Risky behaviours

**School Safeguarding Team**

The following are members of the school’s safeguarding team:

* Chair of the Board of Governors- Mr Brendan Headley
* Vice chair of Board of Governors- Sr. Philomena Horner
* Designated Governors for Child Protection- Mr Ruairi McVeigh (Received Training in Term 1 2019)
* **Principal/** **Designated Teacher** – Mrs Emma Mc Donald
* **Deputy Designated Teachers** – Mrs Karen Rafferty / Miss Laura Murray

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Education and Libraries [Northern Ireland] Order 2003 [Articles 17, 18 and 19] place a statutory duty on Board of Governors to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and to determine the measures to be taken at the school with a view to protecting pupils from abuse [whether at school or elsewhere].

The Chair of Board of Governors should:

* Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment
* Ensure that the school has a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in place and that staff implement the policy
* Ensure that the governors undertake appropriate child protection and recruitment and selection training provided by the EA Child Protection Support Services for Schools, the EA Governor Support and Human Resource Departments
* Ensure that a designated governor for child protection is appointed
* Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/ allegation against the school principal
* Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates, and a full written annual report in relation to child protection activity.

Principal/ Designated Teacher:

* DENI 1999/10 is implemented within the school
* That all staff receive child protection training
* That all necessary referrals are taken forward in the appropriate manner
* That the chairperson of the Board of Governors is kept informed
* That child protection activity features on the agenda of the Board of Governor Meetings.
* That the school’s child protection policy is reviewed annually and all parents/ guardians receive a copy.
* That confidentiality is paramount; information should only be shared on a need to know basis.
* Avail of training so that they aware of duties, responsibilities and role of designated officer
* Organise training for all staff
* Act as a point of contact for all staff
* Make referrals to Social Services
* Liaise with the SELB designated officers for Child Protection
* Maintain records for all child protection concerns.

**In the absence of Principal/ Designated Teacher, the Deputy Designated teacher will complete the above roles**.

**Designated Governor for Child Protection**

The designated governor will provide the child protection lead in order to advise the Governors on:

* The role of the designated teachers
* The content of child protection policies
* The content of Code of Conduct for adults within the school
* Recruitment/ Selection and vetting for staff.

**Procedures**

* Child makes a disclosure to staff member, or staff member has a concern about a child wither as a result of one observation or many observations over a period of time. **Staff member does not investigate**.
* Staff member refers matter to designated teacher (Principal), discusses with designated teacher, and shared note/s of concern.
* Designated teacher (Principal) plans course of action and ensures that a written record is made. Records made should include the following:
* Time
* Date
* Place
* People Present
* What was said – actual words
* Signs of physical injury – described in detail, sketched, **never photographed**

**Flow chart of Procedures**

1. Staff member refers matter to designated teacher (Mrs McDonald), discusses with designated teacher, make full notes.

2. Designated teacher (Mrs McDonald) plans course of action and ensures that a written record is made. In the absence of the Principal, the matter will be referred to the deputy designated teacher (Mrs Rafferty/ Miss Murray)

3. Designated teacher (Mrs McDonald) checks the child record to see if there is current or historical involvement with Social Services.

**Yes**

Designated teacher contacts the named Social Worker for informal discussion/ advice. As a result, designated teacher decides whether or not to make a formal referral.

**No**

May seek clarification from Board’s Designated Officer.

**Referral**  **No Referral**

Immediate contact to Social Services Class Teacher/School

followed by written referral to continue to monitor and

EA Designated Officer, record situation.

Social Services and PSNI Child

Care Unit.

**In the absence of the Principal the matter will be referred to the Deputy Designated teacher, who will take the necessary course of action.**

* Designated Teacher checks the child’s record to see if there is current (or history of) Social Services involvement.
* If yes, the Designated Teacher contacts the named Social Worker for Informal Discussion/Advice. As a result, designated teacher decides whether or not to make a formal referral.
* If not they may seek clarification from Board’s Designated Officer.
* If deemed necessary to be referred, immediate contact to Social Services, followed by written referral to CCMS/ EA Designated Officer, Social Services and PSNI Child Care Unit.
* If not deemed necessary the class teacher/school continue to monitor and record the situation.

**Parents/ Guardians**

Parents/ Guardians should play their part in Child Protection and Safeguarding by:

* telephoning the school on the morning of their child’s absence, or sending in a note on the child’s return to school, so as the school is reassured as to the child’s situation;
* informing the school whenever anyone, other than themselves, intends to pick up the child after school;
* letting the school know in advance if their child is going home to an address other than their own home;
* familiarising themselves with the School’s Pastoral Care, Anti Bullying, Behaviour Management, E Safety and Child Protection Policies;
* reporting to the office when they visit the school;
* raising concerns they have in relation to their child with the school.

**How a Parent can raise a concern.**

***I have a concern about my child’s safety:***

* I can talk to the class teacher.
* If I am still concerned, I can speak/write to the Principal (Mrs McDonald, who is the Designated teacher for Child Protection in Drumnamoe Nursery School).
* If I remain concerned I can speak/write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Brendan Headley on 02838317371/07753818132
* At any time I can ring Health and Social Services (Phone Number 38 327824), and speak to a social worker.

Where staff become aware of concerns or are approached by a child **they should not investigate** – this is a matter for the Social Services – but should **record and report** these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with her and make full notes. These notes or records should be factual, objective in nature and include what was seen, said, heard or reported, the place and time of who was present and should be given to the designated teacher. **The person who reports the incident must treat the matter in confidence**.

The designated teacher will decide whether in the best interest of the child the matter needs referred to the Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent/ guardian may be the possible abuser, the parent will be informed immediately.

The designated teacher may need to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the person making the complaint or giving the information or from others who may have relevant information. The designated teacher may also consult with the EA’s designated officer for child protection or Social Services (Gateway Team) before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our prime priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse and a referral needs to be made, the designated teacher will telephone the Southern Trust Social Services Gateway Team. She will notify the Education Authority’s designated officer for child protection. A UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland) referral form will also be completed and forwarded to the Gateway team.

The following are guidelines for use by staff should a child disclose concerns of a child protection nature.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do | Do Not |
| Do listen to what the child says.  Do assure the child they are not a fault  Do explain to the child that you cannot keep it a secret  Do document exactly what the child says, using his/hers exact words  Do remember not to promise the child confidentiality  Stay calm  Listen  Accept  Reassure  Explain what you are going to do  Record Accurately  Seek support for yourself. | Ask leading questions  Put words into the child’s mouth  Ignore the child’s behaviour  Remove any clothing  Panic  Promise to keep secrets  Ask leading questions  Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily  Delay  Start to investigate  Do nothing |

**Complaints**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal/ Designated teacher (or the deputy designated teacher if she is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal/ designated teacher).

**Complaint about the Principal**

If a complaint is made about the Principal, the Deputy Designated teacher should be informed, and she will refer this on to the chairperson of the Board of Governors. (Mr Brendan Headley).

Where the matter is referred to the Social Services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils (and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the appropriate authorities). The Chairman of the Board of Governors will also be informed immediately.

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the education establishment’s disciplinary procedures, a summary is entered on a Record of Abuse Complaints. This entry which will contain details of the complaint will be made available to the Board of Governors annually.

**Where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a volunteer**.

Any complaint about the conduct of a person working in the school in a voluntary capacity should be treated in the same manner as complaints against a person who is not on the school’s staff, and the above procedure followed. If the Principal has any concern that a child may be at risk, the services of the volunteer should be terminated immediately.

**Attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings**

The Designated Teacher(Principal) / Deputy Designated Teacher may be invited to attend an initial and review child protection case conference or core group meeting convened by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and where possible a school representative will be in attendance. A written report will be provided for these meetings and will be complied after discussion with relevant staff. Feedback will be given to staff under the “need to know” principle on a case by case basis. Children whose names are on the child protection register will be monitored in line with what has been agreed in each child’s protection plan.

**Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held “in confidence”. In the interest of the child, staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly the investigative agencies and where physical or sexual abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this. However, only those who need to know will be told.

**Record Keeping**

All child protection records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files locked in a safe in the school office. These records are kept separate from any other information which is held on the child. Drumnamoe Nursery School also operates an incident book, where staff record any concerns or incidents. This book is also kept in a locked drawer.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is received by the school and is not referred to Social Services – or it is referred and Social Services do not place the child’s name on the Child Protection Register – a record on the child’s file will be permanently preserved and a confidential copy will be sent to any school to which the child subsequently transfers.

If the Social Services inform the school that the child’s name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, a record of this fact and associated documentation from the Social Services will be maintained on the child’s file while he or she continues to attend our school.

When the child’s name is removed from the Child Protection Register then all social services records will be destroyed and only the schools records retained for permanent preservation. Should a child transfer to another school whilst their name is on the child protection register then we will inform the receiving school that his/ her name is on the register and the name of the child’s social worker. All social services records held by us in relation to the child will be held in secure and confidential storage for permanent preservation.

**Vetting Procedures**

All staff paid or unpaid who are appointed to positions in Drumnamoe Nursery School are vetted in accordance with relevant legislation and departmental guidance.

**Code of Conduct for all Staff Paid or Unpaid**

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and their behaviour towards the child and young people in their trust must be above reproach. The school has a code of conduct for staff.

**Please See – Drumnamoe Nursery School Code of Conduct for Employees**.

**Staff Training**

Drumnamoe Nursery School is committed to in-service training for all staff. Each member of staff will receive general training policies and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their new roles and responsibilities. All staff will receive basic child protection awareness training and annual refresher training. The principal/ designated teacher, deputy designated teachers, Chair of the Board of Governors and designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses.

When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school child protection policy and code of conduct and given a copy of the policy which includes what to do if you are worried that a child is being abused.

**Toilet Accidents**

Inevitably, children at Nursery School will have the occasional toileting accidents, and will require a change of clothing. If the situation arises, the following policy will be adapted.

IN THE EVENT OF A TOILETING ACCIDENT

* The child will be taken discreetly to the toilet area.
* The child will be helped to change into clean clothes – whilst respecting the child’s privacy.
* The child’s independence will be encouraged as far as possible in their intimate care.
* At no time will the child be left in full view of the other children.
* Members of staff will remain in full view of the other children.
* Members of staff will remain in full view of others whilst dealing with the changing.
* Students will not be left in charge of changing a child, but may assist a member of staff.
* All changes will be detailed on the record sheets in the bathroom and parents/ guardians will receive a note of the changing details, and spoken to verbally about it if at all possible.

N.B. All parents/ guardians will be asked to sign a consent form at the beginning of the school year agreeing to above procedure.

**Dealing with a distressed child**

If a child becomes distressed at any stage it may be necessary for an adult to comfort them. This may include

* Sitting near the child or the child sitting on an adult’s knee
* Applying a cold cloth to a bumped head/ arm/ knee
* Reassuring the child
* Lifting the child up

If the child does not settle, parents/ guardians will be contacted. If the child has had an injury, parents/ guardians will be informed and the incident should be recorded.

**Reasonable Force**

Drumnamoe Nursery School staff aim to provide a supportive and controlled environment in which children are enabled to thrive as happy and secure individuals. We expect that all staff will be alert to the needs of children and will put their interests first at all times. However it is recognised that occasionally situations will arise where children place themselves or others in danger through deliberate or thoughtless behaviour, and where physical intervention may be necessary to control or restrain a child’s behaviour. As we are caring for very young children, it is inescapable that there will be many occasions when it is completely appropriate for children to be picked up and carried by a member of staff. Children should not be carried unnecessarily or as a matter of course. Once they are able to walk unaided, they should always be encouraged to do so when moving around the nursery; if necessary they can be encouraged by an adult holding their hand in support. When a child is picked up, this must always be done by placing the hands under the child’s armpits, with the child facing towards the adult. When a child is being carried, he/she should be held so that the adult’s forearm is supporting the child’s thighs, so that the child may place his/her arms around the adult’s neck for support. If the child struggles, kicks or otherwise resists being carried, do not try to restrain them more tightly, but place them back on the ground and find another solution to the problem.

**Bullying Concerns**

The principal and/ or teacher will discuss any concerns with parents/ guardians and make brief notes about these concerns. Staff will monitor the situation closely and record any necessary observations. Staff will work to develop the self-esteem and self-confidence of the particular child (through circle time, friendships games, praise etc.). Staff will keep parents/ guardians informed. If the situation continues staff will contact the designated child protection officer at EA for advice.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the staff and Principal of Drumnamoe Nursery School.