

# **Ballincrossig National School**

## **Child Protection Policy**

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## **Introductory Statement**

The staff, parents and management of Ballincrossig N.S. have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and “Child Protection Guidelines”.

This policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the followings areas:-

- a) Prevention – curriculum provision
- b) Procedures - procedures for dealing with concerns / disclosures
- c) Practice - best practice in child protection

An individual copy of this policy document and the appended section from the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures will be made available to all staff.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with ‘Children First’ and the DES child protection guidelines and procedures.

## **Aims**

This policy aims to:

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment for students and staff
- Provide a personal “Safety Skills” education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in the school
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community
- Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children and staff
- Ensure that all staff members are familiar with the ‘Children First’ and the DES guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosures of child abuse.
- Provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all school staff

## **Prevention**

The “Stay Safe” Programme for Children is the primary resource used in this school to provide education for children on abuse prevention. The programme is taught as part of the schools’ SPHE curriculum under the strand unit Safety and Protection. The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every second year in accordance with the SPHE two-year cycle plan. The Stay Safe Programme is the primary resource used to provide education for pupils on abuse prevention in the primary class as part of the schools SPHE Curriculum under the Strand Unit Safety and Protection.

Parents are informed that an RSE programme is in use in the school and permission is sought from the parents of all pupils before commencing the programme.

Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible.

Addressing the teaching of Stay Safe in a multi-class situation, the touches lesson for first and second class will be taught when infants go home on that day. We will use the Stay Safe pack for pupils with SEN if the need arises. The LS/RT and SNA will support the programme of prevention. Information meetings will be organised for parents.

Children are advised not to bring mobile phones to school .parents are advised to use [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) for information on web safety. Please refer to the internet usage policy.

At all times there will be adequate supervision of pupils.

## **Procedures**

All staff (teachers, special needs assistant, ancillary staff, secretarial) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in 'Children First' and the Department of Education and Skills document, 'Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures'. A copy of the procedures has been given to all staff.

The Board of Management of this school has appointed Dianne Crean as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Marie Prenderville as the deputy DLP. Signs with this information are displayed in the school office.

In line with the 2011 guidelines and procedures The DLP will address Child Protection at every BOM meeting, noting in the minutes the number of reports made to the HSE since the last meeting if applicable.

## **Practice**

The staff and board of management of this school have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussions and consultation the staff and board of management have agreed that the following practices be adopted:

### **(a) Physical contact**

Physical contact between school personnel and the child should always be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult.

While physical contact may be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child the following should be factors in determining its appropriateness.

- It is acceptable to the child
- It is open and not secretive
- The age and developmental stage of the child

School personnel should avoid doing anything of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

(b) Visitors / Guest Speakers:

Visitors/guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The school (principal/teachers) has a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use by guests is appropriate. Garda vetting is required for all substitutes and student teachers on placement prior to commencement in the school.

(c) Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs:

In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting /intimate care a meeting will be convened, after enrolment and before the child starts school, between parents/guardians, class teacher, special needs assistant, principal and if appropriate the pupil. The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain the specific needs of the child and to determine how the school can best meet those needs. The staff to be involved in this care will be identified and provision will be made for occasions when the particular staff involved, are absent. The needs of the student should be outlined by the parent in the pupil's care plan.

(d) Toileting accidents:

The principal/teacher will ring the parents to come to the school to assist if this arises.

(e) One- to One teaching

If one-to-one teaching is in the best interest of the child every effort will be made to ensure that this teaching takes place in an open environment. Work being carried out by Special Needs Assistants will be carried out under the direction of the class teacher in an open environment. If a staff is on their own with a pupil, the door to the room will remain open.

(f) Changing for Games/ PE/ Swimming

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for aquatics. They come dressed in appropriate attire to school for the other strands of the physical education curriculum.

While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable a

full record of the incident should be made and reported to the principal and the parents/guardians.

### **Handling disclosures from children (taken from the Child Protection Guidelines)**

An abused child is likely to be under severe emotional stress and a staff member may be the only adult whom the child is prepared to trust. Great care should be taken not to damage that trust. When information is offered in confidence, the member of staff will need to act with sensitivity in responding to the disclosure. The member of staff will need to reassure the child, and retain his or her trust, while explaining the need for action and the possible consequences, which will necessarily involve other adults being informed. It is important to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her, but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anyone else. While the basis for concern must be established as comprehensively as possible, the following advice is offered to school personnel to whom a child makes a disclosure of abuse:

- Listen to the child
- Do not ask leading questions nor make suggestions to the child
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises
- Do not stop a child recalling significant events
- Do not over react
- Explain that further help may have to be sought
- Record the discussion accurately and retain the record

This information should then be reported to the Designated Liaison Person as outlined in Chapter 3 Paragraph 3.1.1 (page 11) of the Child Protection Guidelines (available on school plan on server). The record of the discussion should be given to and retained by the Designated Liaison Person (Dianne Crean, if she is unavailable Marie Prenderville, the vice –principal is the deputy designated liaison person in Ballincrossig NS.

### **Links to other policy / planning areas:**

Prevention: SPHE curriculum, Strand Unit on ‘Safety and Protection’ and the School Code of Behaviour.

Procedures: Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Statement.

## **Communication and Ratification**

This policy is available in paper format for all school staff and will be given to parents on request.

This policy adopted by the BOM on 16/11/10 and was reviewed in accordance with the updated procedures received by the principal on the 24/10/11 and the changes will be ratified by the BOM at the next meeting.

## **Review and Monitoring**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management each year to ensure that it is in line with DES procedures. The Board of Management has provided support from the PDST during 2011 in relation to Child Protection. This policy was reviewed in November 2011 in line with the new guidelines and procedures. The appendices in the circulars will be used to review the Child Protection Policy and Procedures annually.