

STAY SAFE

**CHILD
PROTECTION
POLICY**

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Introductory Statement

The staff, parents and management of St John's National School 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 following 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 Science 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 DES child protection guidelines and procedures.

Aims

This policy aims to

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment
- Provide a personal safety skills education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in 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 aware of and 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 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 (Personal Safety).

On enrolment of their child parents will be informed that the Stay Safe programme is in use in the school and a copy of the Stay Safe 'A Parent's Guide' is provided.

The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every second year in accordance with the SPHE two-year cycle plan.

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

Stay Safe pack for children with learning difficulties is available in the school and will be used when deemed appropriate.

The Learning Support Teachers, the home school community liaison co-ordinator, resource teachers, SNA's will teach / support a programme of prevention if required.

Information meetings held for sixth class parents before the class commence the sensitive issues.

Parents must make alternative arrangements if they wish to withdraw their child from these lessons.

Procedures:

All staff (teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff, secretarial, caretaking etc.) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in 'Children First' and the Department of Education and Science document, 'Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures'.

(See attached Appendix, pages 5 to 20 from the DES guidelines)

The Board of Management of this school has appointed **Mary Mc Nea** as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and **Mairead Murphy** as the deputy DLP.

The staff and management of this school have agreed.

*All concerns/disclosures involving child protection /child welfare issues will be reported in the first instance to the DLP (deputy DLP where appropriate).

* Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making that report.

* A strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality – information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should only be given on a need to know basis.

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 discussion 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.

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. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file.

d. **Toileting accidents:**

Clean underwear and suitable clothing will be kept in the school so that if a pupil has an 'accident' of this nature they will in the first instance be offered fresh clothing into which they can change. The parents/guardians will be contacted.

e. **Learning Support**

All special education and learning support teachers will operate in an open learning environment on all occasions. Parents of children who are involved will be informed and their written agreement sought. Special Needs Assistants work will be carried out under the direction of the Class teacher in an open environment.

f. **Changing for Games / PE / Swimming**

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for games/PE/swimming. Where assistance is needed this will be done in the communal areas and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff / volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress / undress a child in a cubicle / private area. In such situations where privacy is required the parent/guardian of the child will be asked to assist the child. At all times there must be adequate supervision of pupils.

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 principal and parents.

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Links to other policy / planning areas:

Prevention: SPHE curriculum, Strand Unit on ‘Safety and Protection’
The School Code of Discipline
Health and Safety

Procedures: Code of Behaviour
Health and Safety Statement

Practice: Swimming Policy
School Tours / Outings
IT – Acceptable use policy

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises.

Staff will be requested on a regular basis to review the school policy in this area and every effort will be made to ensure that the attention of all new staff is drawn to the school child protection policy.

The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff. The previous policy was ratified on March 14 2011.

Policy adopted by the BOM on 2 Feb 2012 and 28th March 2012 . This policy has been given to all teachers and the Parents’ Association.

Some suggestions for monitoring

Teachers are the only professionals who are in regular day to day contact with school-aged children and, because of that, we have a key role in situations where there are suspicions that a child is being abused. When there are such concerns, it is essential to keep an objective and factual record of all the information available (DES Guidelines, page 10, paragraph 2.5.1). We may also be requested, following a child protection conference, to keep a child under observation in a manner that is not inconsistent with our existing duties (DES guidelines, page 13, paragraph 3.4.6). This hand-out has been created to assist teachers in this regard.

Useful Hint: Enter your observations under the various headings as appropriate. This will help to categorise your observations and enable you to note an emerging pattern or a deteriorating situation.

1. Name of School:

Code

Keep in secure place

Strictly Confidential

2. Attendance and Punctuality

Dates and times are important, since patterns or absence or lateness can be very revealing. If late, note if brought to school by parent/carer/older sibling and record any explanation offered.

Remember to sign and date each entry

3. Appearance, Hygiene, Care

Record observations of the child's appearance, for example, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing, no lunch.

Record observations in chronological order

4. Physical Injury

Give detailed description including, in the child's or carer's own words, if any explanation is offered.

Include sketch of injury, if appropriate

5. Child's Behaviour

A Child may become increasingly aggressive, tense, un-responsive or show other signs of distress. Any sexualised behaviour should be noted.

Describe what you have observed factually

6. Child's Language

The child may not have the language / be afraid to verbalise clearly what is happening. They may however drop hints or refer to what is happening obliquely.

Record child's exact words, not the adult equivalents

7. Child's Drawings / Writing / Play

_A young child may show few signs of abuse when he/she experiences a sense of security in a busy, structured classroom setting therefore careful observation of the child in less formal or unstructured settings are important. Always include the context in your record eg “when returning from the PE Room”, “during small break”, “when lining up for home time”.

Remember context can be very important

8. Mood Changes

Child may, for example, become quiet and tense towards end of day or if collected by a certain adult. This might also happen on certain days or before or after certain activities. Again, remember to include the context in your recording.

Remember monitoring should be systematic, continuous and requires perseverance.

	Sample Record	
Code		

Child Protection Policy of St John's N.S , Breaffy Castlebar , Co Mayo.

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of St John's N.S. has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary Schools as part of this overall child protection policy.

2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mary Mc Nea

3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Mairead Murphy Deputy Principal

4. In its policies, practices and activities, St John's N.S. will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

5. Our Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policies are particularly relevant to our Child Protection Policy.

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

6. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

7. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

All staff received Child Protection Training on 7th March 2012.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17th January 2017

Signed: Tom Canavan

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: George Moran

Principal

Date: 17/1/17

The Date of the next review is October/ November 2017

All Staff of Breaffy N.S attended a two hour retraining session on Wed 7th 2012 March with Margaret Nohilly from the Child Abuse Prevention programme organised by the Principal.

After this meeting each teacher received a folder to document / record any observations they have in relation to a child that they may have concerns about, a sample letter to be sent to parents and Some suggestions for monitoring.

Following on from this day we need to decide as a staff

- When we teach the stay safe Programme?**
- Each class will teach it on a particular fortnight each year and this will be decided at whole school level when planning the school year.**
- Year 1 is the odd year and year 2 is the even numbered year.**

A copy of review/ suggestions/ areas of improvements be given to Mary Mc Nea Murphy (DLP)