



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Curriculum Leader: Mrs H McCann (Designated Teacher) &
Mr J Costelloe (Deputy Designated Teacher)

Policy Reviewed: Annually

Introduction

Maine Integrated Primary School fully supports “The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child” which states in Article 3 –

“... when organisations make decisions which affect children, the best interest of the child must be a primary consideration.”

Our Child Protection/Pastoral Care Policy is based on this premise. We will –

“provide child-centred education where the individual needs of the child are cared for in a caring and happy environment.”

Maine Integrated Primary School strives to promote primary education of the highest quality for all children in an integrated and caring environment.

Rationale

We in Maine Integrated Primary School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, Intimate Care Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy. We aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by –

- helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse
- helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others
- helping them acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All our staff, teaching and ancillary have been subject to appropriate background checks. Other volunteers, including parents, who may be alone with children or travel with the school on a residential visit, will also be vetted by Access NI. A Code of Conduct is issued to all staff. This is intended to assist staff in the complex issue of child abuse by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff.

A member of staff who is engaged in regulated activity by the school will supervise pupils when any visitor is in contact with children from the school. This includes, but is not limited to, sporting coaches, a school photographer and any extra-curricular volunteers.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child. The welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school. We are aware that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

What is Child Abuse?

We use the following definition as stated in ACPC Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Sexual 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.

Physical Abuse

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, suffocation, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriate giving drugs to control behaviour.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that he/she is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he/she meets the needs of another person.

It may involve causing a child to 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 misuse may expose a child to emotional harm.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to cause 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 medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision.

It may also include non-organic failure to thrive.

Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring. They will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the target and to discipline the bully. Parents of both target and person exhibiting bullying behaviour will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. Team action will be taken to protect the target. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the Principal within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case but will include the loss of privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. The pupil's parents will be notified.

If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the matter will be investigated further and the Designated Teacher notified.

Young Carers

Staff are aware of the responsibilities placed on a young carer and they should be supportive towards them. If there are any notable changes in attitude or behaviour they should notify the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher.

Vetting of Adults in School

We start with the presumption of trust and confidence in those who work with children and in their good sense and judgement. All adults engaged in unsupervised regulated activity in the school will have appropriate vetting before commencement of the activity in accordance with DENI Circular 2012/19 and DENI Circular 2013/01. This includes teaching and non-teaching staff employed by school, but also volunteers including parental volunteers. When professional services are provided to the school by the Education Authority, such as Educational Welfare Office, Peripatetic Teachers, Educational Psychologist or Music Tutors, the school will seek appropriate reassurances from EA regarding their vetting. Volunteers and parents accompanying the school on residential visits must have appropriate Access NI vetting in place before the trip.

Volunteers and other individuals working with the school on an occasional basis will be supervised **at all times** by a member of school staff engaged in regulated activity by the school who has been appropriately vetted and trained. This includes, but is not limited to, sporting coaches, the school photographer, any extra-curricular volunteers any adults not vetted by the school working with children during an educational visit.

Procedures for Reporting Suspect or Disclosed Child Abuse

The designated teacher for child protection is **Mrs McCann**. In her absence, **Mr Costelloe** will assume responsibility for child protection matters.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff will act promptly.

- 1 The member of staff will report these concerns immediately to Mrs McCann.
- 2 Discuss the matter and make notes.
- 3 He/She will not investigate as this is a matter for Social Services.

The Designated Teacher will assess the matter and discuss with the Deputy Designated Child Protection Teacher(if necessary) to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.

The Principal, in consultation with the Designated teacher, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to 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 may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the North-Eastern Board's Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker 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 first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:

- NE Region, Designated Officer for Child Protection (028 9448 2223)
(the above helpline is available between 9.00 am – 5.00 pm during school terms)
- Social Services **0300 1234 333(GATEWAY)**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the Designated Teacher, if he/she is not available) will be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Designated Teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils. He/She may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chair of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher will be informed immediately. He/She will inform the Chair of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

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 Teacher.

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 the information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

The Role of Designated Teacher for Child Protection

- To train all staff in areas of Child Protection.
- To be available to discuss Child Protection concerns of any member of staff.
- To keep records of all Child Protection concerns.
- To make referrals to Social Services or PSNI Care Units.
- To liaise with the NE Region Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- To take responsibility for the development of the school's Child Protection Policy.
- To promote a Child Protection ethos in the school.
- To write reports to the Board of Governors regarding Child Protection.
- To notify the Child Protection Support Service for Schools and the Chair of the Board of Governors of Child Protection referrals.

The Role of Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

To support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

Inclusion

This Child Protection Policy is applicable to all children and staff regardless of gender, race, physical or sensory disability.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher will monitor the enforcement of policy and procedures on a regular basis. They will monitor Class Behaviour Records and the Anti-Bullying Concerns File.

Staff Development

All staff have access to Child Protection training on an annual basis. Members of the Board of Governors, Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher and the Principal all receive updates and training as required.

Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding team at Maine IPS will provide support for the Designated Teachers on all Child Protection and Safeguarding issues. The team at Maine IPS is:-

Mr M Woodward (Chair of the Board of Governors)
Mrs A O'Boyle (Delegated Governor for Child Protection)
Mr J Costelloe (Principal and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection)
Mrs H McCann (Designated Teacher for Child Protection)

Conclusion

It is always preferable to prevent abuse or for intervention to take place at the earliest possible stage. Staff, teaching and non-teaching, are well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormal or change in appearance or behaviour. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes eg bereavement, disruption at home etc. Alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms observed.

Our policy is to educate the child in a caring and happy environment. Therefore we will report any changes in the child's appearance or behaviour.

The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually and a copy shared with parents every 2 years.