



St Clare's Convent Primary School

Child Protection Policy

Written Term 3 06/07

To be reviewed Term 3 08/09

Context for policy:

Following a review of existing Child protection procedures (See appendix 1) and consultation with SELB Child Protection Officers, the Governors, Principal and Staff of St. Clare's Primary School have adopted the following DENI circulars:

- 1999/10. Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection
- 2003/13 Welfare and Protection of Pupils. (Education and Libraries NI Order 2003)
- 2006/06 Child protection: Recruitment of people to work with children in educational settings
- 2006/07 Employment of Substitute teachers

We agree that all children have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse. Children must be kept safe from harm and given proper care by those looking after them. Thus we have all agreed to uphold the Policy and implement the procedures set out in the relevant DENI circulars.

It is important to note that due to N.I Child Care Legislation, we are duty bound to comply with specific child protection requirements. Consequently, we may contact external agencies and / or make referrals without consulting parents. We recognise and accept that our first responsibility is, at all times, towards the children in our care and we will endeavour to protect them and preserve their safety.

To this end, we have designated Miss Keenan to have specific responsibility for child protection. Miss Keenan has been identified as the Designated Teacher to all members of staff - teaching and non-teaching. In Miss Keenan's absences, Mrs Devlin - Deputy Designated Teacher, will assume this responsibility.

All staff members are fully aware of their pastoral responsibilities and are alerted to the possible signs of abuse. They are well informed of the procedures to be followed. All staff and School Volunteers have been subject to the appropriate background checks. (See appendix 2). A Child protection update is tabled for each full Board of Governors' meeting.

Copies of the DENI Circulars and the School's Child Protection Policy are readily available on request and this policy will be reviewed on a 3-year cycle.

What is abuse?

- **Neglect:** The actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.
- **Physical injury:** Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to child.
- **Sexual abuse:** Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities which they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent of that violate the social taboos of the family roles.
- **Emotional abuse:** Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and /or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse.

Indicators of abuse:

- Unexplained changes in behaviour or performance.
- Bruises, lacerations, burn marks.
- Inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger.
- Excessive dependence, attention seeking.
- Withdrawal, sexual precocity.

NB No single indicator would be confirmation of abuse.

- It is not the responsibility of school staff to undertake investigations or to make enquiries of parents or guardians.
- Social Services will investigate cases of suspected abuse and will determine what action, if any, required.

Reporting suspected abuse.

1. When a staff member has a child protection concern:

- The concern should be reported to Miss Keenan-Designated Teacher or in her absence Mrs Devlin-Deputy Designated Teacher.
- The class teacher should complete the Child Protection record sheet. (See appendix 3) NB **Records should contain ONLY factual information
- The Designated Teacher should meet with Principal to plan course of action.
- If necessary, following consultation with SELB child protection officers, Principal or Designated Teacher may make a referral to Social Services (See appendix 4).
- A copy of the referral should be sent to CCMS and SELB Designated Officers - Jennifer/ Cathy McCann Tel: 02838341975
- Designated Teacher should keep records of all contact.

NOTES:

- An abused child is likely to be under severe emotional stress and the person chosen for the disclosure may be the only adult the child is prepared to talk to or trust.
- When information is offered in confidence the person concerned will need tact and sensitivity to respond to the disclosure.
- Once a disclosure has been made the person concerned is required to act. She will need to:
 - Assure the child that she is not to blame.
 - Avoid making promises to the child, regarding confidentiality that she will not be able to keep.
 - Seek to retain the child's trust while explaining there is a need for action.
 - Explain that other adults must be informed.

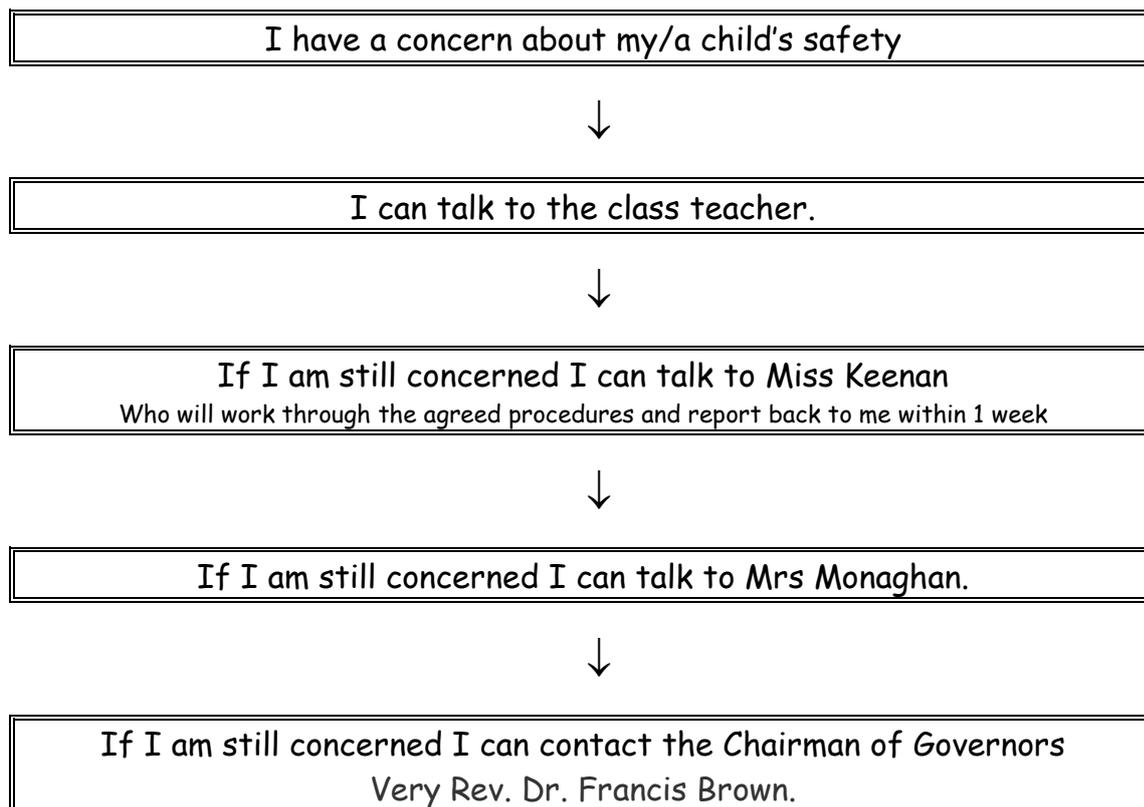
REMEMBER: The welfare of the child is paramount. Confidentiality is subordinate to the need to protect child

2. When a parent has a child protection concern:

- He/she should share the concern with the class teacher or Miss Keenan Designated Teacher. The parent must be informed that in keeping with our child protection policy the information may have to be shared with

SELB child protection officers and then possibly passed onto social services.

- The designated teacher will then follow the procedures outlined above in the section entitled: **(When a concern is voiced by a staff member)** except that Miss Keenan will complete the Child protection Record sheet. Once a concern has been voiced the Designated Teacher will agree to keep the parent informed, within one week, of the outcome. If felt necessary after that the parent may speak directly to the Principal and / or the Chairman of the Board of Governors.



3. When someone has a child protection concern involving a staff member.

Across NI incidents of a staff member having committed abuse are rare. However in the event of this occurring DENI guidelines should be followed: (See appendix 5)

Child protection procedures relating to: 'Looked After Children' or families with Social Services involvement.

- Class teachers will be made aware of circumstances on a need to know basis using the Pastoral Concerns record - handed on with end of year information (see appendix 6).
- The principal, on the school format 'Details of Health and Social Services communication' will note correspondence with Social Workers: (see appendix 7).
- Information will be shared with teachers on a need to know basis.
- Every effort will be made to have a representative from St. Clare's attend Social Service's case conferences. In the event of this not being possible written reports etc will be submitted to Social Services.

Child protection procedures relating to: 'Recruitment and selection of staff/volunteers.'

Within the context of DENI circulars 2006/06 & 2006/07

- All adults working in school either in a paid or unpaid capacity will be PECS cleared. SELB DOR form will be used "Application for a criminal background check and suitability to work with children."
- CCMS recruitment procedures will be strictly adhered to in order that Child Protection issues are high on the agenda at all recruitments. In addition at least one governor sitting on a selection panel at interview will have undergone governor Child Protection training (provided by SELB)
- All substitute teachers employed in ST Clare's must be listed on the GTCNI Register of teachers.
- Short-term staff appointments will have a simplified version (See appendix 8) of our Child Protection policy explained to them i.e. "if there are any child protection concerns these should be shared with 'designated teacher' - Miss E Keenan (Vice principal). Miss Keenan will provide Child protection training to each newly appointed staff member as part of the induction process.

Additional related policy statements

To ensure our children's safety and well-being is paramount we implement a range of related policies. Please refer to:

- Intimate care policy
- School trips policy
- Anti - bullying policy
- Policy on pupils' use of mobile phones
- Policy on the use of pupils' images
- Acceptable use of the Internet policy
- Code of behaviour for all staff working in St Clare's.

And all Health and Safety policies:

- First Aid Policy
- Fire safety policy
- Policy for moving pupils safely around the school
- Policy for pupils leaving school early
- Policy for promoting Drugs awareness (Scheduled to be written in Term 3 08/09)
- Policy for RSE (Scheduled to be written in Term 3 08/09)

Key points in these policies are summarised on our Parents' Child Protection booklet (*distributed to parents Term 1 07/08.*)