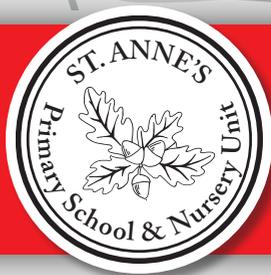


St Anne's Nursery & Primary School Child Protection Policy



**“Tall oaks from
little acorns grow”**



ST. ANNE'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Guiding Principles

- This policy is in accordance with DENI Circular 99/10
- The welfare of the children **is paramount.**
- At all times there must be a multi-disciplinary and a multi-agency approach and commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm.
- The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, teachers and children must be respected and information will only be shared in the interests of the child's welfare.

Policy Statement

We in St. Anne's Nursery and Primary School have a primary responsibility for the care and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, and in which our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to ensure that everyone who works in the school – teachers, non-teaching staff, governors and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action required when abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. To this end, the school will ensure that all staff, whether full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary are aware of child protection issues, and their role with regard to these. The overriding concern of all the people who come to work in St. Anne's is the care, welfare and safety of each child and this is paramount.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Team at St Anne's Primary School

Principal Mr M Keenan

Designated Teacher for Child Protection
and Vice Principal..... Ms E OCarroll

Designated Governor for Child Protection Mrs H Elliott

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection..... Miss R Connor

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection
in the Nursery..... Mrs Hamill

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse means ill-treatment or neglect, which leads to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm.

Abusers

Those people who have been identified as abusers through the legal process suggest strongly that abusers tend to be known to the child (but not exclusively) and have regular access to children. Therefore, children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child, such as a foster parent or member of staff in a residential home), people who work in the caring professions, an acquaintance or stranger, who may be an adult or young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or a failure on the part of the parent or carer to act or to provide care, or both.

ABUSE MAY TAKE A NUMBER OF FORMS

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Physical Indicators

- Multiple bruising or bizarre markings on the skin.
- Multiple bruising at different stages of resolution.
- Bruising and or lacerations around the mouth.
- Finger and thumb marks on the face or body.
- Black eyes (particularly when both are affected).
- Burns, scalds or bites which appear to have been caused by adults.
- Untreated injuries.

Behavioural Indicators

- Self-destructive tendencies.
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
- Chronic runaway.
- Aggressive or withdrawn.
- Fear of returning home.
- Reluctance to have physical contact.
- Clothing inappropriate to weather - worn to hide part of the body.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Physical Indicators

- Constant hunger.
- Poor state of clothing / personal hygiene.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Emaciation / distended stomach.
- Constant tiredness.

Behavioural Indicators

- Tiredness, listlessness.
- Lack of social relationships.
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging.
- Frequently absent or late.
- Low self-esteem.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. This can be the involvement of children and adolescent in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or which violate the social taboos. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact or may include non-contact activities which encourage children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or groom a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Physical Indicators

- Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat.
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes.
- Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections.
- Venereal diseases.

Behavioural Indicators

- Chronically depressed/suicidal.
- Inappropriately seductive or precocious.
- Sexually explicit language.
- Low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence.
- Recurring nightmares/fear of the dark.
- Outbursts of anger/hysteria.
- Overly protective of siblings.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

Physical Indicators

- Sudden speech disorder.
- Signs of self-mutilation.
- Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness).
- Wetting and/or soiling.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Poor peer relationships.

Behavioural Indicators

- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb-sucking).
- Reluctance for parent liaison.
- Fear of new situations.
- Chronic runaway.
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.

Exploitation¹

This is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Identification of Abuse

Because of our day-to-day contact with individual children, we as teachers – but also non-teaching staff, including lunch-time supervisors and ancillary staff – are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms or changes in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement or other disruption in family circumstances. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse.

Signs of abuse

The signs of abuse (*not an exhaustive list*) such as those described above can do no more than give rise to concern – they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. But teachers and other school staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and be alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated. A child may make a comment which would indicate a child protection concern. A child may make a disclosure of abuse. Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he or she must report this **immediately**, following the school's guidelines on the identification and reporting of suspected abuse.

Children who display harmful sexualised behaviour

Any concerns should be notified to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

¹ Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

BULLYING *A Child Protection Issue*

*Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St. Anne's Nursery and Primary School. All members of staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both the victim and the bully will be contacted immediately bullying behaviour has been identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the Designated Teacher within one day of making the complaint, indicating the stage at which the investigation is, and the action that may be taken.

The sanctions against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case. The bully's behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. **If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists then the Designated Teacher will instigate Child Protection procedures.**

What should a worker at St. Anne's do when they suspect abuse?

Teaching and non-teaching staff are in daily contact with children and may be the first to notice changes in a child's behaviour or possible evidence of physical abuse. Children who have been abused may also confide in a member of St. Anne's whom they trust. Therefore, when abuse is suspected it should be reported immediately to the Designated Teacher– Ms OCarroll, and, if she is not available, to the Deputy Designated Teacher - Miss Connor, or the Deputy Designated Teacher for the Nursery – Mrs Hamill. If none of these is available, contact the principal, Mr Keenan.

**NB. Suspicion of abuse does not mean a disclosure
(see Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse)**

**(St. Anne's Nursery and Primary School Anti Bullying Policy deals with this issue in more detail)*

Confidentiality

- No promise of secrecy can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.
- Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies.
- Sensitive information about children and parents is confidential and should not be made the subject of general conversation outside the school, other than with statutory officials.
- All staff should recognise, therefore, that in order to protect children from harm, confidentiality must be subordinated to the need to take appropriate action, by involving others in the child's best interest.

Dealing With Disclosures of Abuse – The 5 Rs

A child may quite innocently disclose details of abuse that occurs within the family or other situations. It is also the case that children with experience of abuse may unburden themselves to a member of staff as the one adult they can trust. It is vital that the member of staff in whom a child has chosen to confide is sympathetic and supportive. The member of staff should remain calm and reassuring. Children who have suffered abuse may have low self-esteem or may withdraw if they detect signs of doubt or revulsion.

1 RECEIVE

- Listen to the child, and do not to interrupt if he or she is freely recalling significant events.
- Never attempt to cross-examine the child or press for information.

2 REASSURE

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by talking to you.
- Do not promise to keep secret what the child has said. Explain that you may need to speak with one of the members of the Safeguarding team who will know what to do next and how to help them.

3 RESPOND

- Care must be taken in asking questions and interpreting children's responses.
- Do not ask questions which encourage the child to change his or her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?" (a leading question).

4 RECORD

A note of the discussion should be **made immediately** after it has taken place which should record:

- The information revealed by the child, quoting his or her words, where possible.
- The date, time, place, to whom the suspicions were reported and any other persons present.
- Any signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, or sketched in a diagram, but under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed.
- Date, sign and time the record.

5 REPORT

- **Immediately** pass a copy to the Designated Teacher, Ms OCarroll or, in her absence to the Deputy Designated Teacher - Miss Connor, or the Deputy Designated Teacher for the Nursery – Mrs Hamill or in their absence to the Principal Mr Keenan **No** copies should be kept in electronic form. The Designated Teacher, Ms O Carroll or, in her absence, the Deputy Designated Teacher, Miss Connor, or the Deputy Designated Teacher for the Nursery – Mrs Hamill, or Mr Keenan must **always** be informed even if the abuse is merely suspected.
- No attempt should be made to discuss concerns or fears with the parents or indeed with anyone who is not involved with the care of the child. If the child's allegations prove to be untrue, reporting them to someone who is not concerned with the care of the child may be deemed to be defamatory.
- Staff should also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings.

RECEIVE,
REASSURE,
RESPOND

RECORD
& REPORT

REFERRAL AND THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

In all cases where abuse is suspected, or where an allegation has been made by a pupil that abuse has taken place, or where serious concerns exist about the welfare of the child, members of staff should report verbally and in written format the information to the Designated Teacher. The Designated Teacher, Ms O Carroll, then meets with the Principal to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made. The Designated Teacher should immediately refer these cases to, or consult with, the social services. She may also notify the Designated Officer of the Belfast Education and Library Board and the CCMS Senior Management Officer (Schools).

In any case where a school has concerns about possible child abuse it is important that a record is kept (not electronically) at all stages – this should include dates, events and action taken.

The following two figures illustrate procedures for action about a complaint or disclosure:

Figure 1: Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff.

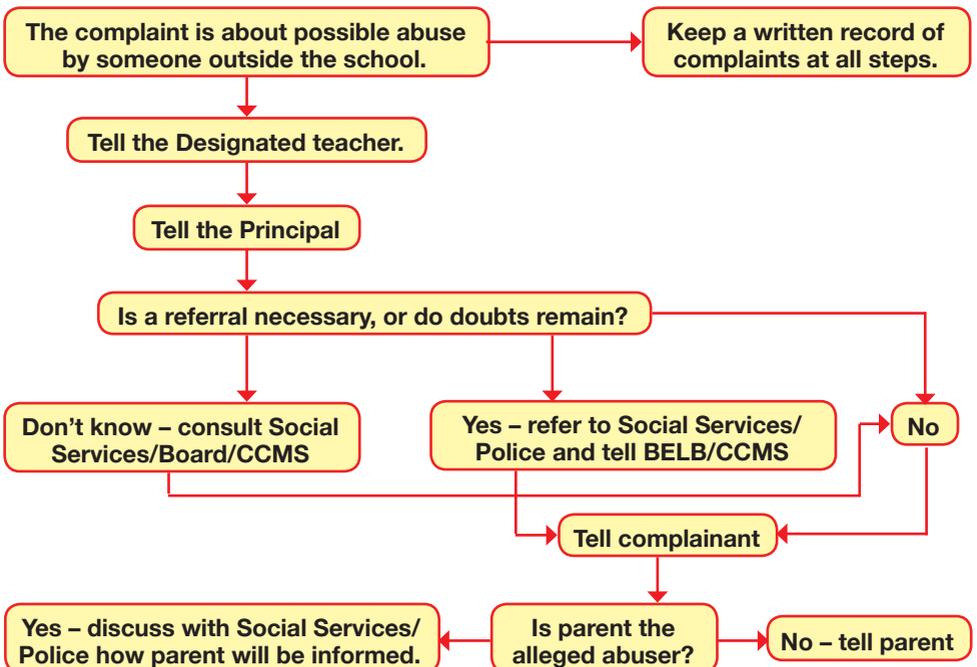
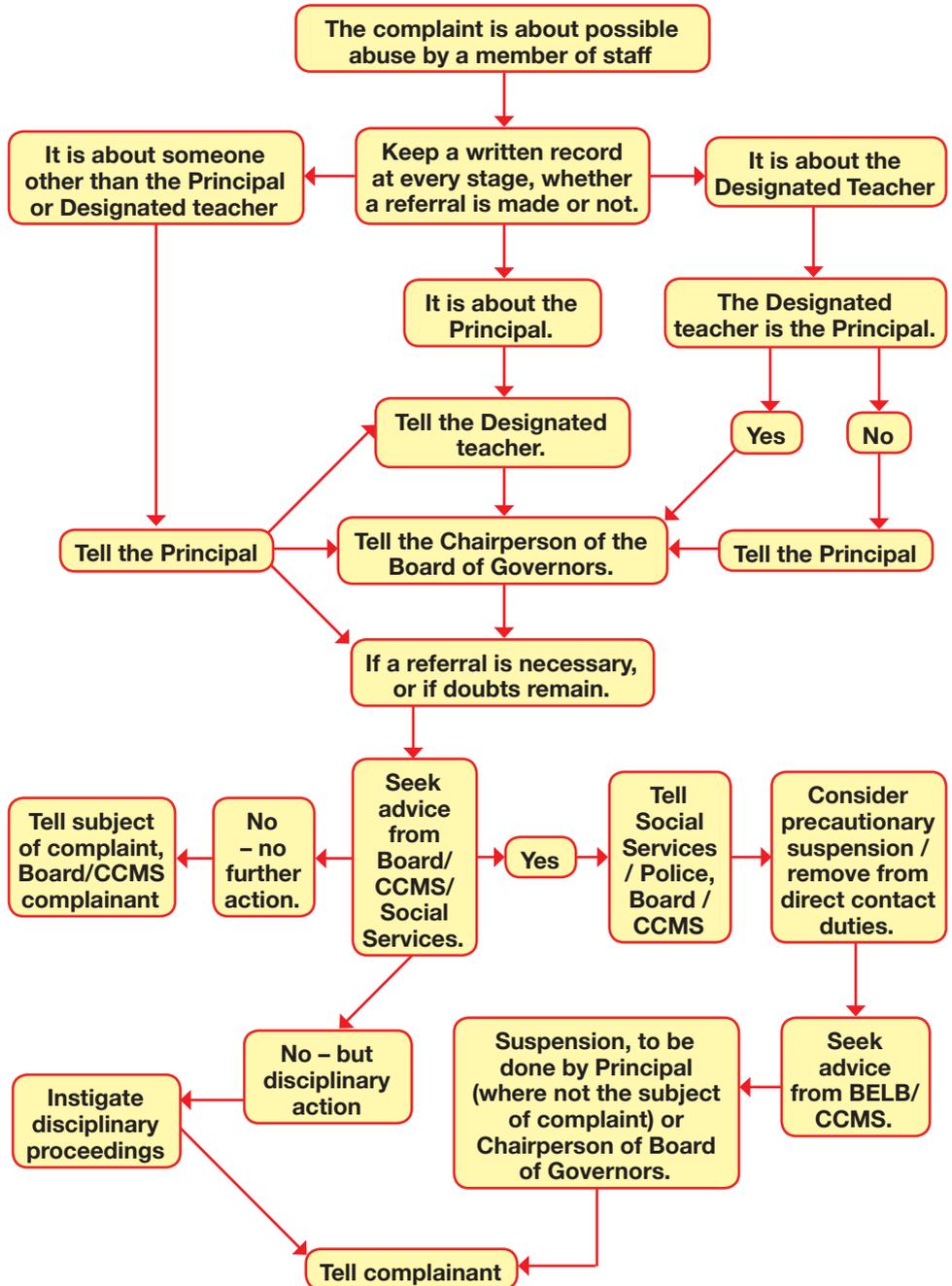


Figure 2: Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL THOSE WORKING IN ST ANNE'S PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and their behaviour towards children in their charge must be above reproach. The Code of Conduct is not intended to discourage positive interaction between staff and pupils but to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of Child Abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on appropriate conduct.

Private meetings with pupils

When confidential interviews are taking place, staff should:

- Conduct such interviews in a room with a visual panel, or with the door open, and not use a sign prohibiting entry to an interview room
- Where possible have another pupil, or preferably another adult, nearby during the interview.

Physical contact with pupils

- It is important that everyone is aware of the risks they face if they use corporal punishment to discipline pupils, or if they touch children other than to comfort the youngest of them or to deal with injuries or accidents.
- As a general principle staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils. This is particularly the case with older primary school children, especially in Primary 6/7.

Physical contact with Pupils in St Anne's Nursery

Physical contact will be necessary for the staff at St Anne's Nursery Unit, if a child has an accident while, for example at the water tray or at the toilet. Parents are made aware of the possibility of this physical contact and must sign a consent form, allowing it to take place. **Only permanent members of staff may change a child's clothing.**

In order not to place the staff in a suspect position with regard to changing children, they should:

- Tell another member of staff that they are changing the child.
- Change the child in a reasonably open space, if possible where the other member of staff can see them.
- Be gentle with the child, especially if the child needs cleaned following a toileting accident.
- Try not to make the child feel bad about what is happening.
- Respect the child's dignity at all times.

Intimate care and changes of clothing

Full details of procedures in such circumstances are contained in the St Anne's Intimate Care Policy.

Principles for staff conduct

Physical contact, which may be misunderstood by the pupils, parents or other casual observers should be avoided. Putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, which is repeated with an individual pupil, should be avoided. Other more obvious and more intimate contact should never occur.

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting, such as a caring parent would give. Staff should use their discretion in such cases.

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that their actions may be misunderstood by a pupil, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Designated Teacher at the school. This would apply especially in a case where a child had to be restrained physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury on others or themselves, from damaging property or committing a criminal offence.

- Where possible, staff should avoid one-to-one contact with children in the following areas: toilets, classrooms, cars/minibuses or after school.
- Staff should never invite pupils to their homes.
- Staff must not under any circumstances use corporal punishment, such as hitting. If there is a problem of serious misbehaviour and the member of staff cannot deal with the situation they should bring the pupil(s) to the Principal / Vice Principal.
- If, in an emergency, staff have to administer first aid, they should ensure where possible that other children or another adult are present, if staff have any doubts as to whether necessary physical contact in the circumstances could be misunderstood.
- No member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency because another person is not present.
- Staff must never make sexually suggestive comments to or about a child, even in jest.
- Staff must never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to themselves. If there is an attempted cover-up, staff should be aware that they could be implicated.
- Any report of alleged bullying of a pupil must be passed to the Designated Teacher.

Choice and use of teaching materials

- Staff must take due care when using teaching materials of a sensitive nature, especially sex education programmes.
- If members of staff are in doubt, they should consult the Principal.
- Staff should not use unsuitable video/DVD films/programmes. Certificate 'U' and 'PG' do not necessarily mean they are suitable. 'Uc' is the only suitable classification.

Relationships and attitudes

- Staff should ensure that their relationships with the pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils.
- From time to time, it is prudent for all staff to re-appraise their teaching style, relationships with children, and their manner and approach to individual children to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions in the minds of colleagues, of pupils or of the parents/guardians.

Short-Term Staff

Short-term staff includes temporary and substitute teachers, temporary ancillary staff, temporary Classroom Assistants and Peripatetic staff. They should be made aware of the policy, understanding in particular the Procedures for Disclosure and the "Staff Code of Conduct."

Vetting Procedures

The school arranges vetting of all staff and volunteers. They are required to complete a police check form, which is passed to ACCESSNI, the vetting service of the PSNI. Official external educational support personnel are vetted by their institution. Students being hosted in St Anne's PS are vetted by their third-level institutions. Visitors are not left unsupervised in the company of pupils. These procedures are to ensure that those people who work in, or become part of the school community at any time, do not represent a threat to the health and well-being of our pupils.

Reporting Arrangements

The following reports **must** be undertaken

1. An annual report regarding the status of pupils on the Child Protection Register must be presented at the Board of Governors.
2. The Chair of the Governors must see, on an annual basis, a record of complaints regarding the conduct of staff, even if there are none.

Parents/Guardians, if you have a concern about the safety of your child or another child, you may:

Talk to the class teacher

you may contact the Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Ms OCarroll** or, the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: **Miss R Connor** or, the Deputy Designated Teacher for the Nursery: **Mrs Hamill** or, the Principal, **Mr M Keenan** at St. Anne's PS on **028 9061 5414**

The school will respond, indicating a proposed course of action. Or if deemed necessary, may refer to the relevant Child Protection Officers at Social Services CCMS BELB The PSNI

If you are still concerned you can contact the Designated Governor for Child Protection Mrs Helen Elliott via the school office (Tel 028 9061 5414) or at the school's address

At any time you can refer your concerns directly to CCMS or to Social Services or to the PSNI

While it may be necessary to share concerns and complaints, we at St Anne's will proceed in a confidential manner and only those who need to know will be informed. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have a concern or complaint. We **all** have a **duty of care** to protect children, and their welfare must always be our priority.

Contacts

CCMS 028 9042 6972

DUTY SOCIAL WORKER GATEWAY LISBURN 0300 1000 300
Out of hours service **028 9056 5444**

DUTY SOCIAL WORKER GATEWAY BELFAST 028 9050 7000
Out of hours service **028 9504 9999**

PSNI 028 9025 9299

St Anne's Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

Bullying is an issue that causes great anxiety and distress to victims and their families.

St Anne's has a responsibility to identify and deal with bullying.

Bullying takes many forms. It can be in the form of:

- Physical abuse - hitting, kicking, taking and damaging belongings.
- Verbal Abuse - name-calling, insulting or repeated teasing.
- Mental Abuse - of a persistent nature e.g. excluding someone from social groups.

Bullying is defined as offensive behaviour, which is repeated on a number of occasions.

Purposes

It is in the interest of all members of the school community that relationships between staff and pupils, staff and staff and pupil and pupil are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The aim is to create an ethos within the school, which makes bullying unacceptable. An atmosphere of mutual respect should be developed, and, where bullying occurs, it will be addressed immediately and effectively.

Guidelines

The school:

- Encourages pupils and parents to report bullying in any form.
- Expects teachers to listen; to act appropriately; to record incidents accurately, and, if necessary, to refer to the Vice-Principal / Designated Teacher / Principal.
- Makes pupils, parents and staff aware of the procedures for dealing with bullying.
- Involves the whole staff, including non-teaching staff.
- Makes all pupils and parents aware of the policy of 'Zero Tolerance' towards bullying.
- Has in place pro-active strategies and preventative responses regarding bullying.

Procedures

- Teachers should interview the parties involved, to ascertain the precise nature of the problem.
- A description of the incident(s) and action taken should be recorded on a Record of Concern (Bullying) form and copies given to the relevant teachers. It is essential to keep all written records of such incidents.
- If the incident cannot be resolved simply, some of the following procedures should be implemented:
 - i. The victim and / or the perpetrator of bullying should be referred to the Vice-Principal, the Principal or the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
 - ii. Parents should be invited to school for interview, accompanied by an interpreter if necessary.
 - iii. The situation should be regularly monitored to make sure that there is no recurrence of the bullying.
 - iv. The perpetrator of bullying may be separated from peers, or, in more serious cases, be suspended.

**Child Protection Policy
Revised 2017**



St Anne's Nursery & Primary School
50 Kingsway Finaghy Belfast BT10 0NE

Main Office Tel: 028 90 615414
Email: info@stannes.belfast.ni.sch.uk
Website: www.saintannesps.com