

Addendum to St Therese of Lisieux PS Child Protection Policy

Covid-19 Arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection

1. CONTEXT

From 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of key workers and children who are vulnerable.

The current national health concerns relating to Covid-19 creates uncertainty in the lives of children and young people. Daily routines, family life, friendship groups and the safe space that schools provide have been disrupted. For many children, the need to spend most of their day at home will bring an additional challenge, and for some this will be an additional safeguarding risk factor. It is important that the adults responsible for safeguarding children are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs in these most unusual circumstances. It is critically important that children who are or may be at risk are identified so that that a proportionate, compassionate and sensitive response can be taken.

2. PROCEDURES

Staff will continue to follow the procedures outlined in our school's Child Protection Policy which is available on our school website.

In addition, the following arrangements have been put in place to support families and monitor pupil safety:

- The school email address and school phone number have been made available to all parents. Parents have been told that senior members of staff are contactable during lockdown. Contact details for key agencies including Gateway and the Family Support Hub were provided to all families.
- Teachers provide online learning via ClassDojo and or/Google Classroom.
- Our website and twitter account provides parents with a range of resources and links to additional online learning, support and guidance.
- We would remind everyone to stay safe when using online resources and to report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.
- Our School Counsellor remains available for phone consultation and parents are made aware of this via the website.
- In line with the information previously provided to schools by the EA CPSS, teachers and classroom assistants may make phone calls to parents. These will be pastoral in nature

and a record will be kept of any issues reported by parents. Any concerns around pupil well-being will be shared without delay with a member of the Safeguarding Team.

- If a member of staff is using their personal telephone their number will be withheld to ensure the protection of private information of staff.
- All school staff can contact the principal and the Vice Principal (DT) at any time through email or their personal telephone numbers.

3. ONLINE SAFETY

In order to ensure the safety of all involved the following guidance should be followed if staff and pupils are engaging in online teaching/communication using video conferencing or platforms recommended by and available via C2K.

- Teachers and pupils need to be fully dressed and should not wear pyjamas/sleep wear during the session.
- Students cannot participate from a bedroom.
- The teacher arranges the session and password and shares this only with pupils.
- Pupils must agree not to share the password with anyone else.
- Parental consent will be sought before their child attends online sessions.
- A disclosure or concern over any online forum will be followed up as it would be in school.
- Online sessions should be time limited for the benefit of both children and teachers.

If there is a breach to any of these procedures e.g. pupil gives the password to someone else who joins the group the teacher should immediately terminate the session and advise the Principal.

4. HOW A PARENT CAN RAISE AN ISSUE OR EXPRESS A CONCERN

We would welcome parents asking for advice and help if they have concerns about their child's well-being or safety. Asking for help is a protective factor and parental concerns and requests for help will always be taken seriously.

Any member of staff will listen carefully to parental concerns and ensure that the request for help, if necessary, is brought to the attention of a member of the Safeguarding Team. In this case a decision can be made as to how best to provide help.

5. IF SCHOOL IS OPEN DURING COVID-19 CLOSURES

If school is open for vulnerable pupils and key workers' children the school will adhere to the EA guidance.

If our school is part of a cluster of schools which are open we will share relevant safeguarding information with the Designated Teacher and/or Principal. In accordance with our Child Protection procedures this information will be shared on a need to know basis.

In any event, we will follow current Department of Education and Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff.

6. HOW A CHILD CAN RAISE A CONCERN

We know that while many children will be enjoying their time at home and remain almost unaffected by this unusual situation, there will be others who feel scared, lonely and even those who miss school. Our safeguarding responsibility to all our children continues and we will continue to stay in touch with our pupils.

We will use the following means to connect with our children and families:

- Post daily messages on ClassDojo.
- Set engaging activities for home learning.
- Monitor activity through ClassDojo responses by parents and through activity on Google Classroom.
- Pass on any concerning messages to the Principal or Designated Teacher without delay.
- If we do not hear from parents on at least a weekly basis, teacher will inform the Principal who will make contact by telephone. If the Principal fails to make contact she will make a home visit. If there is no response she will contact Gateway for advice.

7. SOME USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS: –

- <https://www.familysupportni.gov.uk/>
- Parenting NI: help@parentingni.org 0808 8010 722.
- Early Intervention Support Service (EISS): eissbelfast@niacro.co.uk 028 9032 0157
- Family Support Hub: edith.mcmanus@ashtoncentre.com 07396374764
- Gateway/ Child Protection: 90507000
- North Belfast Advice Partnership: advice@ligonielvillage.com 02890391225
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/coronavirus>
- <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Safeguarding Team will review and amend these arrangements regularly during the period of Covid-19 school closure in line with Departmental guidance and advice.

S McTaggart- Principal

F Coyle- Vice Principal

S Barronwell –Chair of BOG