

ST THERESE OF LISIEUX PRIMARY SCHOOL



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The Children Order 1995 places duties on a number of agencies, including Education and Library Boards acting on behalf of children in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse. The central thrust of the Children Order is that the welfare of the child must be of paramount importance and the schools have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in their charge and should take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved (Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection, DENI 1997). The Children's Act 1991 also makes it a criminal offence to fail to notify the correct authorities of alleged child abuse.

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm.¹

Child Protection and Safeguarding is an essential part of St Therese of Lisieux School's Pastoral Care Policies. It develops a framework for an agreed course of action.

The school is legally committed to pursue this course of action. It has implications for all members of the school community: pupils, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, voluntary helpers, parents and Governors.

Mission Statement

The Board of Governors, Principal and Management Team take seriously their primary responsibility for the safety and welfare of the children and staff in St Therese of Lisieux School as set out in the guidance of DENI and CCMS Child Protection Circulars.

Every child has the fundamental right to be safe at school and every parent had the right to expect this from their child's school.

St Therese of Lisieux Primary school will do all in its power to keep children safe.

¹ Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (March 2016)
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>

Aims

1. To create a safe and secure environment for all members of the school community.
2. Develop the children's skills in self protection through an agreed whole school curriculum initiative.

Objectives

This policy ensures that everyone who works in our school, teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers and professionals from outside agencies and indeed anyone who has regular contact with our children in school, is aware of the procedures to follow in the event of suspected abuse or neglect of a child.

Child protection and safeguarding is the responsibility of all who work/volunteer in our school.

The school will contribute by:

1. ensuring pupils have sufficient knowledge about themselves to be able to understand what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate contact
2. enabling children to become aware of strategies which they may use to protect themselves from possible abusive situations
3. delivering an on-going programme of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
4. ensuring that all new staff, volunteers and professionals from outside agencies are made aware of Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures on appointment
5. ensuring all staff and regular voluntary helpers will have undergone security clearance
6. ensuring that designated and deputy designated teachers avail themselves of all opportunities to update their knowledge of child protection procedures.
7. providing regular in-service training to maintain a working awareness among staff and volunteers of child protection issues and child protection procedures

8. maintaining the Child Protection Register and Child Protection Records securely in accordance with requirements outlined in "Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection".

In St Therese of Lisieux School the **Designated Teacher** is **Mr F Coyle, Vice Principal** and the **Deputy Designated Teacher** is **Miss P Gargan**.

In the case of absence the deputy designated teacher assumes the responsibility of the designated teacher.

School Responsibilities

Each school has appointed a designated teacher and a deputy-designated teacher to manage procedures in the event of a child or adult confiding information to a member of staff, or if a member of staff sees signs or observes behaviour which cause them concerns.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to immediately make their concerns known to the designated teacher or, in his absence, to the deputy designated teacher and to make a written record of their concerns as soon as possible.

It is not the responsibility of school staff to undertake investigations or to make enquiries of parents or guardians and in some cases it could be counterproductive for them to do so. It is for the Social Services departments to investigate suspected abuse and determine what action to take, including notifying the police. However, it may be necessary sometimes for staff to seek clarification.

THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Principal: Mrs S McTaggart

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mr F Coyle

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Miss P Gargan

Chair of the Board of Governors: Mrs S Barronwell

Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: Ms M McTaggart

The Safeguarding Team will meet regularly to discuss any current Child Protection issues and concerns, to ensure that the school is following correct procedures and to support the DT and the DDT in carrying out their responsibilities. The Safeguarding Team will facilitate self-evaluation to continue to improve provision. If necessary, any changes to practice will be disseminated to relevant staff immediately.

The Chair of the Board of Governors must:

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school.
- Ensure that the school has a current Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding in place and that staff implement the policy.
- Ensure that appropriate Governors undertake appropriate Child Protection and Recruitment & Selection training.
- Assume lead responsibility for managing any complaint/allegation against the School Principal.

The Role of the Principal is:-

- To ensure that a designated teacher and deputy are appointed who are enabled to fulfil their safeguarding roles.
- To ensure that the operational systems for safeguarding and child protection are managed appropriately.
- To ensure that they have an understanding of the current assessment and referral procedures through the 'Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland' (UNOCINI) process.
- To inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (and the Board of Governors) of developments relating to safeguarding bearing in mind that confidentiality is paramount and specific information is shared on a 'need to know basis' only.
- To ensure that that the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually.
- To ensure safe and effective recruitment and selection of staff/volunteers.
- To manage allegations/ complaints against school staff.
- To maintain the school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints.

The Role of the Designated Teacher is:

- To provide initial induction to all adults (before meeting pupils), and to deliver training to all school staff and volunteers including support staff on the safeguarding and child protection policy.
- Being available to discuss safeguarding/child protection concerns of any member of staff or volunteers.
- Responsibility for managing and keeping records of all child protection concerns appropriately in a secure location.
- To share sensitive information about children on a 'need to know basis'.
- Making referrals to Social Services where appropriate.
- Developing effective links with relevant agencies and co-operating as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Liaising with Designated Officers for Child Protection.
- Have an understanding of the current assessment and referral processes through UNOCINI.
- Keeping the school Principal informed of on-going issues and developments in Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- The lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.
- Ensures parents receive a summary of the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy every 2 years.
- Promotion of a safeguarding ethos in the school.
- Where a pupil on the child protection register changes school, the DT ensures that the Designated Teacher in the receiving school is informed of the child's circumstances and contact details of the child's Social Worker.
- To notify the Chair of The Board of Governors if an allegation is made against the principal.

- To compile reports to the BOG regarding Child Protection and Safeguarding issues.

The Role of the Deputy Designated Teacher is to support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

Roles and Responsibilities of all adults working in the school.

It is the responsibility of all of ALL adults working in the school to record and report possible/ disclosed abuse to the Designated Teacher.

It is the responsibility of all adults to;

- Adopt safeguarding guidelines including the code of conduct for staff.
- Ensure they are aware of safeguarding and child protection procedures and attend training on these issues.
- Ensure that they are familiar with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Ensure that they are familiar with signs and symptoms of possible abuse.
- Act upon any concern, no matter how small it may seem, in accordance with the school's policy and procedures.
- Promote safe practice and challenge poor or unsafe behaviour.
- Ensure all health and safety procedures are adhered to.
- Ensure that they recognise behaviour as a means of communication.
- Teachers must deliver an on-going programme of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding.

Information on Types of Abuse

Types of Abuse

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

Children may be abused in many settings, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

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.

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact

activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming 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.

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. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

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.

Exploitation 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.

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.

Indicators of abuse

Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children, school staff are particularly well placed to observe acquired symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour,

learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of causes, including bereavement, domestic violence or other changes in family circumstances, or drug, alcoholic or solvent misuse.

The following illustrations are examples of common signs and symptoms encountered by teachers, classroom assistants or ancillary staff, which might indicate abuse or neglect. These signs are not a checklist, indeed many of them could have other explanations.

Possible Signs of Neglect

- constant hunger
- poor personal hygiene
- constant tiredness
- poor state of clothing
- emaciation
- frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- untreated medical problems
- destructive tendencies
- low self-esteem
- neurotic behaviour (eg rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- no social relationships
- chronic running away
- compulsive stealing
- scavenging for food or clothes

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

- unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- refusal to discuss injuries
- untreated injuries
- admission of punishment which appears excessive
- fear of parents being contacted
- withdrawal from physical contact
- flinching at sudden movements
- arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- fear of returning home

- fear of medical help
- self-destructive tendencies
- aggression towards others
- chronic running away

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

- physical, mental and emotional development delay or disturbance
- admission of punishment which appears excessive
- over-reaction to mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- fear of new situations
- inappropriate emotional responses to stressful situations
- neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- self-mutilation
- fear of parents being contacted
- extremes of passivity or aggression
- drug / solvent abuse
- chronic running away
- compulsive stealing
- scavenging for food or clothes
- enuresis / encopresis (bedwetting / soiling)

Children Who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour

Child protection procedures require that issues of concern, including inappropriate sexual behaviour, should be notified to the designated teacher for child protection. The designated teacher in turn notifies the Principal and together they decide, taking advice as necessary, on the most appropriate course of action.

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child's development. It will help them as they grow up, and as they start to make decisions about relationships. Schools support children, through PDMU and RE, to develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships. Teachers are often, therefore, in a good position to notice behaviours that give cause for concern.

It can be difficult to distinguish between normal childhood sexual development and experimentation, and sexually inappropriate behaviours. Complicating factors can include the age of the child concerned or whether the child has special educational needs.

Professional judgement is therefore likely to be required and schools should contact the CPSSS for support and advice on the appropriate course of action to take.

The CPSSS staff group has been trained in using specific education guidelines for identifying and managing harmful sexualised and problematic behaviours in education settings. This includes not only safely managing the pupil whose behaviour may pose a risk but also considering the needs of the pupil(s) already exposed to that risk, as well as safeguarding of the rest of the school population. It also includes consideration of effectively responding to parents.

It is important to distinguish between different sexual behaviours – these can be defined as ‘healthy’, ‘problematic’ or ‘harmful’.

Healthy Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- ❖ Exploratory and age appropriate
- ❖ Not intended to cause harm
- ❖ Fun / humorous
- ❖ Without power differentials

Healthy sexual behaviour has generally no need for intervention however there may be instances when interventions are applied, for example, it is not appropriate when displayed in school or during school activities. This may therefore be an opportune time for teachers to positively reinforce appropriate behaviour, drawing on the guidance issued by the Department on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

Problematic Sexual Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- ❖ Not age appropriate
- ❖ One off incident of low key touching over clothes
- ❖ Result of peer pressure
- ❖ Spontaneous rather than planned
- ❖ Lacking in other balancing factors e.g. no intent to cause harm, level of understanding, acceptance of responsibility

- ❖ Targeting other children, to irritate and make feel uncomfortable. Often the children are not scared and can feel free to tell someone
- ❖ Concerning to parents / carers

Problematic sexual behaviour requires some level of intervention, depending on the activity and level of concern. For example, a one-off incident may simply require liaising with parents on setting clear direction that the behaviour is unacceptable, explaining boundaries and providing information and education. However, if the behaviour is considered to be more serious, perhaps because there are a number of aspects of concern, advice from the Education Authority CPSSS may be required. The CPSSS will advise if additional advice from PSNI or Social Services is required.

Harmful Sexualised Behaviour may include some of the following characteristics:

- ❖ Lacks the consent of the victim
- ❖ When the perpetrator uses threats or violence (verbal, physical or emotional) to coerce or intimidate the victim
- ❖ Uses age inappropriate sexually explicit words and phrases
- ❖ Involves inappropriate touching
- ❖ Involves sexual behaviour between children – it is also considered harmful if one of the children is much older – particularly if there is more than two years’ difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not.
- ❖ Involves a younger child abusing an older child, particularly if they have power over them – for example, if the older child is disabled.

Harmful sexualised behaviour will always require intervention and we will seek advice from CPSSS and the Gateway team. Whether a child is responsible for harmful sexualised behaviour, is a victim of sexual abuse, or both, it is important to apply principles that remain child centred. Harmful sexualised behaviour displayed by children must be recognised as damaging to both the victim and the child who engages in the abusive behaviour. A child who engages in abuse of this kind may be suffering, or be at risk of, significant harm and may also be in need of protection. Some children who engage in harmful sexualised behaviour are likely to have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties and may have experienced some form of abuse themselves in the past.

Nonetheless, in the balance of what is in the child's best interests, the needs of the victim must be given priority; and nothing should be done which causes the victim further harm. The needs of children who engage in harmful sexualised behaviour towards others should be considered separately from the needs of their victims.

Schools should be conscious of the fact that it is not appropriate to refer to children displaying harmful sexualised behaviour using such terms as 'sexually aggressive', 'sexually precocious' or 'child perpetrators'.

It must also be borne in mind that harmful sexualised behaviour is primarily a child protection concern and should **not** be addressed through the school discipline procedures

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM is illegal in the UK, as is taking a child from the UK to carry this out else. FGM is usually carried out on girls between the ages of 4 and 13, although the majority of cases are thought to take place between the ages of 5 and 8. FGM is practised in 28 African countries and in parts of the Middle East and the Far East. It continues to be practised in some communities in Western Europe. One of the difficulties is that FGM-practising families may not see it as an act of abuse. It is accepted practice in some communities, and this can make it very difficult for a girl or any other member of her family to come forward. Schools should be particularly alert for signs when a girl comes from a community where FGM is practised.

Countries in which FGM is particularly common practice include:

- Burkina Faso
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- The Gambia
- Guinea
- Liberia
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Sierra Leone
- Somalia
- Sudan

Indicators that FGM is imminent

Indicators that it might be about to take place include:

- being a girl between the ages of 5 to 8 within a community where FGM is practised
- when a female family elder visits, particularly if she arrives from another country
- a girl talking about a 'special procedure' or saying that she is attending a special ceremony to become a woman
- a girl being taken out of the country for a prolonged period.

Indicators that FGM may have taken place include:

- a girl having difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- she spends longer than normal going to the toilet
- she spends long periods of time away from the classroom during the day because of bladder or menstrual problems
- prolonged or repeated absences from school
- withdrawal or depression when a girl returns to school after a prolonged period of absence

As FGM is a form of child abuse, any concerns should be reported to the DT/DDT without delay. The DT/DDT will seek immediate advice from the CPSSS/ Gateway Team.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

Domestic violence and abuse can have a profoundly negative effect on a child's emotional, psychological and social well-being. A child does not have to directly witness domestic violence to be adversely affected by it. Living in a violent or abusive domestic environment is harmful to children. Children can witness domestic violence and abuse directly and indirectly between their carers and/or the effects of it; this frequently constitutes emotional abuse and can have profoundly damaging effects on a child's or young person's well-being.

As a matter of priority, we follow up instances where a disclosure, concern or information is revealed from any source, including from a child, about domestic violence and abuse which could impact children either directly or indirectly. Where there is evidence or reasonable suspicion of domestic violence and abuse in a household where children reside, this must be referred to HSCT Gateway Service without delay.

Children's right to Self-Protection

At St Therese of Lisieux we will ensure through the teaching of our Religious Programme 'Alive O'/'Grow in Love', and through the use of PDMU, Circle Time and various external programmes, that all children in our school know they have the right:

To be safe: We will teach children that everyone has rights, such as the right to breathe which should not be taken away. We tell children that no one should take away their right to be safe.

To protect their own bodies: Children need to know that their body belongs to them, particularly the private parts covered by their swimwear.

To say NO: We tell children it's all right to say no to anyone if that person tries to do something to them that they feel is wrong. Most children are taught to listen to and obey adults and older people without question.

To tell: We assure children that no matter what happens we will not be angry with them and that we want them to tell us of any incident that frightens or confuses them or makes them unhappy.

To be believed: When children are told to go to an adult for help they need to know they will be believed and supported.

Not to keep secrets: We teach children that some secrets should never be kept, no matter if they promised not to tell.

Staff Guidelines for Self Protection

1. In the event of injury to a child, ensure that it is recorded and witnessed by another adult.
2. Keep records of any false allegations a child makes against you or other staff including - "you're always picking on me", "you hit me", or comments such as "don't touch me".
3. If a child touches you or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way or place, record what happened and tell another adult. As it could be totally innocent, do not make the child feel like a criminal. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable situation. Neither is it a good idea for the child to go on doing this as the next person might take advantage and then say the child instigated it.
4. If you take children on journeys, always have two along. If it is an overnight trip, always check the rooms in pairs.
5. Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with one child away from other people. If it is a one-to-one, make sure the door is open. Tell another member of staff if you are going to see a child on your own.

6. If you are on a holiday or residential setting never, under any circumstances, take a child or children into your room.
7. Do give firm guidelines on sexually inappropriate behaviour to the child. Explain that the behaviour is unacceptable and could get the child into difficulty, but do not make the child feel guilty. The behaviour may be an imitation of the abuse the child has suffered and is not the child's fault.
8. If you are in a care situation with children with special needs, try to have another person present when changing nappies/clothing or assisting with toileting.
9. Never do something of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. This includes cleaning bottoms etc, or any other activity that could be misconstrued.
10. Do not go into the toilet alone with children if possible.
11. Be mindful of how and where you touch children.
12. Be careful of extended hugs and kisses from children. This might be particularly relevant to those working with children with special needs.
13. When taking children on an outing, think of how you appear to the public - they may misunderstand your actions. It may mean that disruptive children cannot go on outings.
14. All members of staff should carry identification when on journeys with children.
15. If you must physically restrain a child for any reason, be aware that it could be misinterpreted as assault.
16. Do not make inappropriate comments about a child even in jest.
17. Never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to yourself. If there is an attempted cover-up, you could be implicated in the silence.

Liability for Staff

Any teacher or other member of staff who complies with procedures in making a report of suspected child abuse is acting within the course of his/her employment and in such circumstances, where he/she has acted in good faith, will receive the full support of the Education Authority (EA) and will not be legally or financially liable.

Recruitment

The Board of Governors ensure that they follow safe recruitment practices in line with *Circular 2006/06 Child Protection: Recruitment of People to Work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings* and ensures that pre-employment checks are carried out before appointments are made. The DT/DDT will ensure that the newly appointed staff are familiarised with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures upon appointment or as soon as practicable thereafter. In emergency situations, however, it is accepted that temporary replacements for non-teaching staff (eg a classroom assistant for a child with a statement of special educational needs) may have to be made before a check can be carried out if no-one who has been checked is available.

As a general principle, the presence of unvetted people in school should be exceptional, short-term, controlled, and (except for visitors) only if vetted people have been sought and are not available.

Visitors to the School

Visitors to schools, such as parents, suppliers of goods and services, to carry out maintenance etc do not routinely need to be vetted before being allowed onto school premises. However, such visitors should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require. Pupils coming into the school on work experience do not require AccessNI clearance if they are fully supervised by school staff.

Visitors are:

- Met/directed by school staff/representatives.
- Signed in and out of the school by school staff.
- If appropriate, be given restricted access to only specific areas of the school.
- Where possible, escorted by a member of staff/representative.
- Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes.
- Access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.
- If delivering goods or carrying out building/maintenance or repair tasks their work should be cordoned off from pupils for health and safety reasons.
- Not left unsupervised with children or young people;
- Are accompanied to the location of the meeting.

How to respond to a child who makes a disclosure

Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all staff. Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, and, where abuse is suspected, a legal duty to report this.

Where a child confides in a member of staff or a volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret it is important that the child is told sensitively that it may be necessary to share the information with those who need to know about it, and explain that this is important to ensure the child's safekeeping.

All staff and volunteers who receive sensitive information about children or parents in the course of their professional duties should be aware that such information is confidential, and is not to be made the subject of general conversation, or disclosed to others outside the school other than statutory officials, as required by this policy.

1. Receive

- Stay calm
- Listen to what the child is saying without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what the child is saying
- Be discreet

2. Reassure

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by talking to you, do not make promises that you cannot keep (eg everything will be alright now, I'll stay with you)
- Do not promise confidentiality, staff have a duty to refer the matter to the designated teacher for child protection. Explain that you will need to talk to the DT/DDT who will know what to do next
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt if the child refers to it

3. Respond

- Respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter to the designated teacher for child protection
- Do ask open questions (can you tell me what happened? Anything else you wish to tell me? Yes)
- Do not ask closed question (those that will evoke a yes/no response, eg Did _____ do this to you?). Such questions invalidate evidence where a subsequent court action is necessary
- Do not criticise the perpetrator as the child may love that person
- Do explain what you will do next (talk with the designated teacher who will know how to get help)

4. Record

- Make notes as soon as possible after hearing what the child has said and write them up
- Do not destroy these original notes
- Record the date, time, place, people present and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour. Record the words the child used as much as possible – if the child uses ‘pet’ words record those rather than translating them into ‘proper’ words. Any injuries or marks noticed can be depicted on a diagram showing position and extent
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations and assumptions
- Sign the record and hand it to the designated teacher.
- Do **NOT** photograph any marks/bruises or record anything on CD/tape/phone.

(All written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately, are securely maintained, separate from the main pupil file, and in a locked location.)

5. Refer

- **Concerns about possible abuse must be referred to the Designated Teacher as soon as possible within the working day.** The Designated Teacher may consult the Principal and DDT in the decision making process regarding possible referral to statutory service. They may also consult the Child Protection Support Service for Schools and/or CCMS.

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated teacher for child protection in the school.

Staff procedures for reporting suspected/disclosed abuse

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 must act promptly.**

He/she should not investigate – this is a matter for social services – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with him/her, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the note to the DT.

The DT will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

The DT, in consultation with the Principal, 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 of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services.** Unless there are concerns that a parent/guardian may be the possible abuser, the parents/guardians will be informed immediately.

The DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with Child Protection at CCMS, The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse of a child, the DT will inform:

- Social Services - using the regional UNOCINI framework (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland)
- EA/CCMS's Designated Officer for Child Protection

The school is required to refer any cases of suspected and/or confirmed instances of Domestic Violence to Social Services.

The UNOCINI referral will be made as soon as possible following the initial telephone referral to social services Gateway Team. This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL - CHILD PROTECTION'.

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 signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT.

Safeguarding concerns about an adult working in the school

Where a concern is raised about possible child abuse of a child by an adult working in the school, the Principal (or the DT if the Principal is unavailable) must be informed immediately and the procedures set out in Circular 2015/13 will be followed.

The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Designated Teacher or the Principal).

Where the matter is referred to social services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against the Principal, the DT must be informed immediately. He/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice, ensure the appropriate action is taken and create a record of the advice and actions taken.

Procedure for Teachers Reporting an Incident of Suspected / Disclosed Child Abuse in School

Child makes a disclosure to teacher or other staff member or a staff member has concerns about a child either as a result of one observation or many over a period of time.

Teacher does not investigate.

MUST ACT PROMPTLY

Teacher refers matter to Designated Teacher or the Deputy Designated Teacher, discusses with DT/DDT and makes full notes.

Designated Teacher meets with Principal (in the case of the Principal's absence, the Vice Principal/DDT) to plan course of action and to ensure a written record is made.

After careful consideration and having sought advice where necessary the Principal / Designated Teacher makes referral to:-
Social Services and informs CPSSS and CCMS.

Record Keeping

Professional judgement will be required in assessing a concern and deciding when to commence a 'child protection record'. Child abuse includes:

- neglect
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- exploitation
- domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- child sexual exploitation
- female genital mutilation
- children who display harmful sexualised behaviour

However, a child protection record might be commenced if there is evidence of a safeguarding risk of, for example, self harm, suicidal ideation or other behaviours that cause concern.

Any member of staff who has a concern about the welfare or safety of a child or young person should complete a **Note of Concern** (see Appendix 1). Notes must be made as soon as possible after the incident to ensure an expedient response, and certainly within 24 hours, to maintain the accuracy and content of the report. For some children a one-off serious incident or concern may occur and staff will have no doubt that this must be immediately recorded and reported. More often, however, it is the accumulation of a number of small incidents, events or observations that can provide the evidence of harm being caused to a child.

The staff member should report the concern to **the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DT)** at an early stage, immediately if the concern is of a serious nature, as the DT may be aware of other circumstances which would influence steps to be taken. The Note of Concern and any further details discussed or action taken should be placed on the pupil's **Child Protection File** and should be signed and dated by both parties to confirm the information is accurate.

The DT should store each Note of Concern and copy UNOCINI documents in the child's **Child Protection File** and supplement it with all other records created and acquired as the management of the concern progresses. A Child Protection File is separate to the School

Pupil/ Educational Record and must be stored securely. The Pupil/ Educational Record is marked with a coloured sticker to indicate the presence of a separate confidential file.

All records of a safeguarding / child protection nature are held securely within the school. Access to such records is restricted to the Principal and the Designated Teacher (DT) /Deputy Designated Teachers (DDTs) for Child Protection.

The Child Protection File should contain:

- Chronology of events/ action taken
- All records of concern
- Any notes initially recorded,
- Records of discussions and telephone calls (with colleagues, parents and children/young people and other agencies or services)
- Correspondence with other organisations - sent and received
- Referral forms – both for support services and specialist services (irrespective of outcome)
- Formal plans linked to the child e.g. child protection plan, child in need plan
- Risk assessments
- Risk Management Plans/ Individual Safety and Support Plans
- School reports to interagency meetings and conferences
- Minutes of interagency meetings e.g. child in need, strategy, child protection conference
- Any other relevant notes/ papers

Relevant and accurate records are essential to inform effective decision making and assist in the sharing of appropriate information. **They should contain factual information or be clearly specified as unsubstantiated** and should include all relevant information even if it appears contradictory.

Any significant event or change which has an impact on the child's welfare must be included in the Child Protection File, and noted on the chronology of events/ action taken, even if it seems to be contradictory. As a guideline, although not exhaustive, the following may be relevant:

- **Change of circumstances:** changes of carer, address, legal status, school, family circumstances and household composition.

- **Issues for the child:** physical or mental health issues, incidents of abuse, losses, developmental issues, incidents of running away/going missing, incidents re bullying, offending or police involvement.
- **Family issues:** changes in family composition, loss and separation, domestic violence, financial or housing problems, physical or mental health, substance misuse, homelessness, imprisonment, victimisation.
- **Professional involvement:** referrals made, involvement of other agencies, assessments, significant decisions, interventions, social services involvement.

It will be the responsibility of the Designated Teacher to ensure that such records are kept up-to-date and appropriate information is forwarded when a child moves school (in compliance with DE guidance)

Sharing Information within the School

Child Protection information is confidential and often highly sensitive and decisions to share, or not to share, must always be made in the interest of protecting the child if at risk of significant harm. There is also a duty to protect individuals and, as such, within a school information should only be shared with staff who require access to it, in order to work in a safe and informed way with the child and family. The DT should record who information is shared with, when, and the reasons for this. All staff should understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and the consequences of any breach.

Maintaining records

If a school receives a complaint about possible child abuse which is not referred to Social Services - or if it is referred, and the Social Services do not place the child's name on the Child Protection Register - the school will maintain the record on the child's file until his/her thirtieth birthday, and send a confidential copy to any school to which the child subsequently transfers. If Social Services inform the school that the child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, the school should maintain a record of this fact, and associated documentation from Social Services, on the child's file while he/she continues to attend. When a child whose name is on the Child Protection Register changes school, the school which the child is leaving should inform the receiving school immediately that his/her name is on the Register, and destroy all child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences, and should inform the child's Case Co-

ordinator in Social Services. The school to which the child is transferring should contact Social Services for relevant information. If the Social Services inform the school that the child's name has been removed from the Register, the school should destroy any child protection records on the child supplied by Social Services, including records of case conferences.

Supporting Vulnerable Children through the Preventative Curriculum

The staff of St Therese of Lisieux Primary School recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of safeguarding and protection.

We also recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging or they may be withdrawn.

We will endeavour to support the pupils who are exposed to risk of harm through supporting such pupils in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan.

We recognise that we have a pastoral responsibility towards our pupils, in particular to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Support for all pupils in developing skills in self-protection, confidence and wellbeing will be afforded as follows:

- Establishing and maintaining an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensuring that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- The content of the curriculum, particularly through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, Religion and Relationships and Sexuality Education.

- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, which is aimed at supporting all pupils in the school. The school will ensure that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, Behaviour Support Team, PSNI, the School Nurse, Jigsaw Counselling Service, NSPCC and Barnardos.
- Ensuring that all children know who they can talk to if they have worries/concerns.
- Ensuring that children develop skills in self-protection by having events such as Internet Safety Week, Anti-bullying Month etc and taking part in the Anti Bullying Ambassadors scheme.

Online safety

Online safety remains a paramount concern. We want pupils to have the opportunity to avail of all the positive benefits that come from learning, exploring and connecting with each other online but also to know how to stay safe and act responsibly themselves.

In January 2014, the SBNI published its Report '*An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland*'. The report highlights the requirement to take appropriate preventative action to protect children and minimise the associated risks around online safety. These risks have been defined under four categories:

Content risks: The child is exposed to harmful materials.

Contact risks: The child participates in adult-initiated online activity and/or is at risk of grooming.

Conduct risks: The child is a perpetrator or subject to bullying behaviour in peer-to-peer exchange and/or is at risk of bullying, entrapment and/or blackmail.

Commercial risks: The child is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs/fraud.

To minimise these risks to children we;

- Provide filtered internet access (c2k and classnet) including emails
- Develop awareness of the need for individual passwords and password security as pupils move up through the school
- Teach a planned, progressive and age appropriate online safety curriculum which is highlighted during Internet safety week in Feb each year. The issue of cyber bullying is also addressed during Anti -bullying week in October. Carefully selected stories are used to develop awareness of online dangers and safety with younger children.
- Pupils are taught to be SMART online.
- Parents are asked for written permission for their child to use the internet in school.
- Pupils from P4-P7 have to sign up to a Code of Conduct/Acceptable Use Policy to use ICT in school.
- Pupils are taught to report any worries or concerns about online content to their teachers/parents.
- The school website publishes photographs of carefully selected pupils, whose parents have given written permission, to celebrate the life and work of the community. Pupil names are not used with the photographs.
- The school uses a Twitter account to communicate with parents and the community. Parents and pupils are made aware of the age restrictions for this platform and so pupils are not followers. Again, where photos that include pupils are tweeted written parental permission will have been obtained and the tweet will not include the names of pupils.
- We discourage parents from taking photos during assemblies, concerts and shows. However, it is very difficult to prevent people from doing so. Therefore we remind parents before each event that many parents do not want photos that include their children to be displayed on the internet/social media and ask that they refrain from doing so.

- Access to pupil data on SIMS is carefully controlled. The school maintains a 'Register of Access' that outlines who has access to different levels of data. Each staff member has their own SIMS password and is aware that it should not be shared.
- Staff have individual passwords and are aware that they should not share these. Passwords are changed regularly.
- Staff are aware of the need to report any issues with inappropriate content to the ICT Coordinator /DT/DDT as soon as possible. The ICT coordinator will report any inappropriate materials that breach the firewall to either C2k or classnet and log these, as well as actions taken to ensure it doesn't happen again. If the issue is Safeguarding/Child Protection staff report to the DT/DDT.
- Staff awareness of the need for online safety is included in Safeguarding and Child Protection training for teaching and support staff.
- Staff have to sign up to an Acceptable Use Policy on using the internet, school-based technologies and personal mobile devices.
- Specific training on Online Safety is accessed for key staff, including the DT and the ICT coordinator.
- Workshops are provided for parents in school to raise awareness of the dangers to children of unsupervised online access and strategies to promote online safety at home and at school. Sessions for parents by other providers in the community are advertised in the newsletter and materials by respected organisations are sent home to highlight key safety messages.

Procedures for Parental Complaints

All parental concerns / complaints are taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as is reasonably possible.

While St Therese of Lisieux Primary School operates an open-door policy for urgent parental meetings with Principal, it may be necessary for parents to make an appointment in order to be allocated a reasonable amount of time for the complaint to be discussed fully.

How A Parent Can Raise A Concern or Make a Complaint in Relation to Child Protection

If a parent has concerns about his or her child or another child's safety, they may take the following action.

I have a concern about my
Child or another child's safety



I can talk to the
CLASS TEACHER



If I am still concerned, I can talk to
the Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher for
Child Protection,
Mr Coyle or Miss Gargan



If I am still concerned, I can talk to
The Principal
Mrs McTaggart



If I am still concerned, I can
talk/write
to the,
Chairman of the Board of
Governors
Mrs Barronwell



At any time, I can talk to the Social
Worker at the local Health
And Social Services Trust

The local PSNI Care Unit

First Aid

St. Therese of Lisieux Primary School takes seriously any medical difficulties of which they have been made aware and have implemented a training policy for all staff e.g. in the use of the EpiPen, CPR. This training is refreshed annually, facilitated by the school nurse.

Instructions for use of the EpiPen and photographs of each child are placed on the staffroom notice board, in a discreet area of the canteen kitchen and in a location in each of the pupil's classrooms.

Mrs Corina McWilliams and Mrs Julie O'Prey are trained in the Heartstart Programme. A number of classroom assistants /supervisors are trained in Emergency First Aid at Work

Use of Photographs

Permission is requested for the use of children's photographs for display purposes, including the website.

Access N.I verification

Anyone who comes in to work with our children on a regular basis, and who has unsupervised access to children, including volunteer helpers, parent helpers, NVQ students and sports coaches will be asked to complete the Access NI form as an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate (EDC) will be required. Volunteers, usually parents, who accompany classes on school trips, to the swimming pool or to the church, will usually not be asked to obtain an EDC, as they will be supervised by the class teacher in line with the requirements of Circular 2012/19.

Extended Schools

At St Therese of Lisieux Primary School we aim to provide a wide range of after school activities. All staff/coaches are given a summary of our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures and are asked to sign and adhere to a Code of Conduct. We require all coaches and volunteers to have an enhanced Access NI check.

Links with other policies

This policy should not be seen in isolation and should be cross referenced with other curricular and pastoral policies within the school; in particular the Pastoral Care Policy, Staff Code of

Conduct, Intimate Care Policy, E safety Policy, Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Safe Handling Policy, Relationships and Sexuality Policy, Religious Education Policy, PDMU Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Parental Complaints Procedures, Attendance and Punctuality Policy, Healthy Eating Policy, Extended Schools Policy, Critical Incident Management Policy and Classroom Assistants Policy.

Development, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of Policy including Future developments

This policy has been drawn up after consultation with the CPSSS and will be monitored, evaluated and updated annually to take cognisance of future developments and changes in legislation to enable us to further improve the quality of provision for the benefit of all pupils and staff.

Appendices

1. Note of Concern form
2. Record of Phone Updates for Social Services
3. Report for Child Protection Conference
4. Staff Code of Conduct
5. Code of Conduct for Staff, Parents and Volunteers
6. Protecting Life in Schools-Identifying Warning Signs
7. Protecting Life in Schools-Responding to a Distressed Pupil
8. Protecting Life in Schools-Safeguarding Action Checklist
9. Female Genital Mutilation Map