

Edenderry Primary School
Portadown

**CHILD
PROTECTION
POLICY**



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1.INTRODUCTION

The following statements of principle, policy and procedure aim to set the conceptual framework which underpins the practices within EDENDERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL. This ethos is reflected in all actions and decisions taken by staff as they follow the detailed guidance set out in the SELB Child Protection Procedures, DENI Circular 1999/10, Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 Guidance and the Southern Area Child Protection Committee Procedures.

General Principles

The principles and philosophy which underpin our work with children are those set out in the ‘UN Convention on the Rights of the Child’ (UK agreement in 1991) and enshrined in the Children (N.I.) Order 1995 (effective from November 1996). In particular the principle we support is that every child or young person has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and with proper care given to their physical, emotional, spiritual well-being, by those looking after them.

The following principles form the basis for effective child protection activity and underpin the guidance which we follow:

- The child or young person’s welfare must always be paramount; this over-rides all other considerations. Where a child or young person is disabled or has special needs these must be taken into consideration.**
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents and families; but where there is a conflict, the child or young person’s interests must always come first.**
- Children have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives. Where a**

child or young person has a disability, specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this.

- **Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters which affect their family.**
- **Actions taken to protect the child or young person (including investigation) should not in themselves be abusive by causing the child or young person unnecessary distress or further harm.**
- **Intervention should not deal with the child or young person in isolation; the child or young person's needs should be considered in the context of the family. Agencies' actions must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child or young person's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race and any special needs.**

2. CONTEXT

Edenderry Primary School is situated in Portadown, Co. Armagh and serves a large area of housing bordering on to the Killicomaine and Gilford Roads and beyond.

The school has approximately 370 pupils in fourteen mainstream classes, two Learning Support Units and an Autistic Spectrum Disorder Unit.

Edenderry has developed a caring and family-supported environment over the years. We have close connections with the local churches and our school is under-pinned with a strong Christian ethos.

We maintain a valuable working relationship with outside agencies such as the Educational Welfare Officer, Pupil Personal Development Service and Social Services.

3.PROCEDURES

Edenderry Primary School recognises our five main responsibilities in the area of Child Protection

- *Prevention*
- *Recognition*
- *Response*
- *Referral*
- *Confidentiality/ record keeping*

Parents will be made aware of our responsibilities and procedures and we hope they will support us in our practice.

Prevention

Edenderry Primary School offers a supportive environment to children who **are** being abused, **have been** abused and **may be** abused in the future. All children are vulnerable.

We have developed and provide a ‘child protection ethos’ and a preventative curriculum. We offer children an alternative model to violent or abusive behaviour and alternative methods of responding. We aim to involve the whole school in creating a ‘listening’ educational establishment.

Edenderry Primary School offers protection on two levels:

- *Immediate protection* – creating a listening environment that makes it easier for children to share their concerns
- *Long-term protection*, enhancing self-esteem and encouraging social skills, breaking the cycle of abusive behaviour.

The Board of Governors ensures that the curriculum includes a programme for children on personal protection e.g. PSNI - PACE (Police and Community Education)

The Board of Governors ensures that Edenderry Primary School has and follows a Code of Conduct drawn up for all members of staff, towards the children in the school. This covers all activities organised in and by the school, whether on educational premises or elsewhere.

We ensure that persons beyond our school who are invited to be involved as helpers/leaders on educational visits or other out of school activities are subject to vetting procedures in keeping with current arrangements for the care and protection of children and young people.

We will ensure that we will provide effective management for our staff through adequate training and supervision.

Recognition

We use the following definitions for Child Abuse:

NEGLECT: the persistent or significant neglect of a child or young person, or the failure to protect a child or young person from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of a child or young person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

PHYSICAL: physical injury to a child or young person, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

SEXUAL: the sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult's or other young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities or any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.

EMOTIONAL: persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child or young person.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in Edenderry Primary School. All 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 victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Response

In the event of an allegation of child abuse the member of staff will:

- Listen to the child or young person and accept what is said
- Record statements
- Explain what they have to do next and to whom they have to talk
- Reassure the child or young person they have done the right thing to talk about it
- Refer information to the designated member of staff

Referral: *Co-operating to Support and Protect Children*

Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse:

The designated member of staff for Child Protection is Jill McClelland, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. In her absence, Sonya Robb, Vice Principal or Stephen Doyle, Principal, will assume responsibility for child protection matters.

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

He/she should not investigate – this is a matter for the Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the designated member of staff, discuss the matter with her and make full notes.

The designated member of staff will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.

The Principal, in consultation with the Designated member of staff, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child or young person, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **If there are any concerns that the child or young person may be at risk, the principal is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult the designated officer from the Education Board or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and appropriate advice. **The safety of the child or young person is our first priority.**

1. Allegations against a Member of Staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal, or designated member of staff, if he is unavailable, must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply unless the complaint is about the designated member of staff or Principal. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

2. Allegations against the Principal

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated member of staff must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

3. Allegations against the Designated Member of Staff

Any complaints must be referred to the Principal.

Suspension from Duties

Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

For reasons of confidentiality the only people who need to know are:

Miss Jill McClelland

Mr Stephen Doyle

Record Keeping

All records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from any other file which is held on the child or young person.

Where a written allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a summary is entered on a Record of Abuse Complaints. This entry, which will contain details of the complaint, will be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually.

Code of Conduct

Staff is aware of and adheres to the Code of Conduct which has been drawn up and agreed through Teachers' Negotiating Machinery and the SELB Code of Conduct for its staff.

(Appendix 1)

4. Staff In-Service

Edenderry Primary School is committed to in-service training for all staff. Each member of staff will receive general training on Policy and Procedures with other members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Edenderry Primary School will update this Policy and Procedures in the light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually.

Participation and consultation with parents will be undertaken.

On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

References:

1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UK Agreement 1991)
2. Children (N.I.) Order 1995 – An Introductory Guide for Schools 1996
3. DENI Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection 1999/10 Circular and Guidance
4. Southern Area Child Protection Procedures
5. Wallace Report July 1998
6. Educational Trips – A Good Practice Guide
7. Integrating Child Protection into the Curriculum
CCEA
8. Evaluating Pastoral Care - Guidance 1999 ETI
9. Co-operating to Protect Children – DHSS
10. Our Duty to Care (Childcare N.I.)
11. Getting it Right (NIVDA)