

HOLYWOOD NURSERY SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

We in Hollywood Nursery School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. 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 enabling them to achieve their full potential. We seek to protect our pupils by helping them learn about the risks of physical abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and by acquiring the confidence and skills necessary to keep themselves safe.

All our staff and students have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff has also adopted a code of practice for behaviour towards pupils. The code is set out in the Appendix to this policy statement.

The purpose of the following procedures on child protection are to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in Hollywood Nursery School has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child. The problem of child abuse will not be knowingly ignored by anyone who works in our school and we are aware that some forms of child abuse also constitute criminal offences.

To aid our staff in the identification of child abuse we use the following definitions:

- **Levels of Abuse**
 - **Potential** – where circumstances make abuse more likely
 - **Suspected** – where the appearance, behaviour or injury to a child or young person alerts someone to suspect that abuse has occurred or is occurring
 - **Confirmed** – where the facts have been proven in court in criminal or care proceedings or where there has been an admission of guilt.

- **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive.

- **Physical** – The deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.
- **Sexual** – involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Emotional** – the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

BULLYING

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse that will not be tolerated in Holywood Nursery 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 the victim and the bully will be contacted immediately bullying is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child may be being bullied will be fully investigated by the staff and action taken to protect and support the victim. Parents will be kept informed of the action being taken by the school by the Principal. The behaviour of children suspected of bullying will be closely monitored by the staff until they are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

- As Holywood Nursery is a single teacher school the Principal, Ms Majury, is the designated teacher for child protection. The deputy designated staff member for child protection is Mrs Hamilton. The Governor with responsibility for child protection is Mrs B K Todd.
- If a child makes a disclosure to any member of staff that raises concerns about possible abuse, the member of staff must act promptly.

- The staff member should not investigate – this is a matter for social services – but concerns should be reported immediately to the Principal, the matter discussed and notes take, leading to a written report.
- The Principal, in consultation with the staff and the SEELB child protection team, plan an immediate course of action and ensure that a written record is made.
- The Principal, in consultation with the SEELB child protection team, will decide whether in the best interests of the child, the matter should be referred to Social Services. **The school is obliged to make a referral if there are concerns that the child may be at risk.** Unless there are concerns that the parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
- No decision to refer a case to the Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:-

- the Social Services
- the SEELB's Designated Officer for Child Protection

(This will be done in an envelope marked 'Confidential – Child Protection').

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply. Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with the children and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complain is made against the Principal, the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the Child Protection Officer at the SEELB must be informed immediately and together they will take the necessary action.

Any member of staff who is unsure of what to do if they have concerns about recognising the signs/symptoms of possible abuse should speak to the Principal or the SEELB Child Protection Officer.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share information with other professionals, however, only those who need to know will be told.

CONTACTS AND HELPLINE

N.S.P.C.C. - Jennymount Court
N. Derby St.,
Belfast
BT15 3HN
Tel: 02890 351135

N.S.P.C.C. Child Protection Helpline – Tel: 0800 800500 (24hrs)

N. I. Childline- P.O. Box 1111
Belfast
BT1 7DZ
Tel: 02890 327773

S.E.E.L.B. - Colm Boal Tel: 02890 566900

Hollywood Police - Tel: 02890 650222