

St Joseph's
Primary School
Donagh



Code of Conduct
for all staff

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Introduction

All actions concerning young children and young people must uphold the best interest of the young person as a primary consideration.

We in St Joseph's PS are always mindful of the fact that we hold a position of trust, and that our behaviour towards the children must always be above reproach. In writing up our Code of Conduct we remember that:

It is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children gain from positive interaction with staff.

It is intended to assist staff in the complex issues of child abuse by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff - **Prudent conduct protects Staff and Children**

Code of Conduct to include:-

1. Private meetings with pupils
2. Physical contact with pupils
3. Choice and use of teaching materials
4. Relationships and attitudes

1. Private Meetings with Pupils

It is recognised that there are occasions in the daily life of the school when confidential interviews with individual pupils must take place.

In the first instance non teaching staff should not investigate incidents and **NEVER** discipline children.

All matters pertaining to behaviour must be relayed to the class teacher/teacher on duty. Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interview with individual pupils. Therefore:-

- Interviews with pupils take place in the staffroom/office with the door open.
- Staff should ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- Another pupil or preferably another adult is to be present or nearby during the interview.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

Staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils.

However we feel that it is unrealistic and unnecessary to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular a distressed child, especially younger children may need reassurance involving physical comforting as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.

Otherwise:

- Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
(DENI circular 1999/9 on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance of the Education (N Ireland) Order 1998 - (Power of member of staff to restrain pupils).
- Physical punishment is illegal as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Certain areas of the school e.g. storerooms, children carrying out messages or bringing visitors to classroom etc are always to be accompanied by another pupil.
- If staff have to administer first aid to a pupil they should ensure that wherever possible this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. **However no member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency** simply because another person is not present.

- Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- Following any serious incident or accident during playtime or lunch time - a written report will be submitted in an **"Incidents Book"** which is kept in the Office. The Principal must be made aware of any such incidents/accidents or in the absence of the Principal - Miss O'Brien assumes responsibility for Children Protection matters.
- Following any action where a member of staff feels that his/her actions could be misconstrued - a written report of the incident must be handed to the Principal immediately.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils on an out of school activity where more informal relationships tend to be usual, where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the school environment.
- If a child has soiled himself/herself - in the first instance the school makes every effort to contact the parent. Failing this an older brother/sister is asked to change the child. If neither of these are possible the teacher plus another adult present helps to change the child.

No member of staff should ever take a child unaccompanied to the toilet or be alone with a child giving rise to comment and speculation.

3. Choice and Use of Teaching Material

- Teachers in St Joseph's PS avoid choosing teaching materials which might be interpreted wrongly.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher consults with the Teacher Responsible for Child Protection or Principal before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

Pupils

Within the pastoral care policies of the school and the Employing Authority, staff ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to speculation or comment.

Others

Our relationship with all associated with our school should aspire to uphold the "Seven Principles of Public Life."

Selflessness

Integrity

Objectivity

Accountability

Openness

Honesty

Leadership

Conclusion

We the combined staff of St Joseph's PS feel that it is impossible and inappropriate to cover all the circumstances in which staff inter-relate with children or where opportunities for their conduct might be misconstrued.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgements are exercised. From time to time staff may feel it is prudent to reappraise our relationships with children and our manner of approach to individual children to ensure that we give no ground for doubt about our intentions in the minds of our colleagues, associates, children or of their parents or guardians.

This policy will be monitored annually

Signed: _____
PRINCIPAL

Date: _____