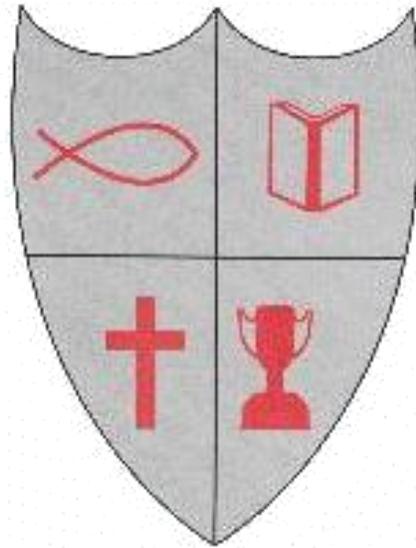


Child Protection Policy



Aughnacloy Primary
School

Child Protection Policy

INTRODUCTION

We at Aughnacloy Primary School have a responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge and we will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, the aims of which are to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, in which all our pupils can learn and develop to their full potential.

We aim to protect our pupils by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognize unwelcome behavior in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school- teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers- has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The care, welfare and safety of each child is of paramount importance and the problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school. We know that some forms of child abuse are a criminal offence.

General Principles:

The principles and philosophy that underpin our work with children are those set out in the 'United Nations Convention on the rights of the child' (UK Agreement, 1991) and enshrined in the Children (NI) Order, 1995 (effective from November 1996). In particular the principle we support is that every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and with proper care by those looking after them given to their physical, emotional spiritual well being.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

Article 3

"Children have the right to have their welfare considered paramount in all decisions taken about them."

Article 12

"Children have the right to be heard"

Article 19

"Children have the right to be protected from abuse and neglect."

Article 29

"Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment."

The other principles we practice under are:

- **The child's welfare must be paramount;** this over-rides all other considerations. Where a child is disabled or has special needs these must be taken into consideration.(Article 23)
- 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's interests must always come first.
- Children have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously.(Article 19) Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives. Where a child has disability specialist assistance should be sought to achieve this.

- Parents/Carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters that affect their family (article 16).
- Actions taken to protect the child (including investigation) should not in themselves be abusive by causing the child unnecessary distress or further harm.
- Intervention should not deal with the child in isolation; the child's needs should be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race and any special needs.
- Where it is necessary to protect the child from further abuse, alternatives, which do not involve moving the child and which minimize disruption of the family, should be explored.

Context

Aughnacloy Primary School is situated in Aughnacloy Village with our intake coming mainly from the surrounding rural environment. We have 127 pupils, 5 full time teachers, 1 Principal Release Teacher, 7 classroom assistants, 3 lunchtime supervisors, 1 cleaner/care-taker and 1 part-time clerical officer. As a safety measure there is a security system in operation that allows identification of all visitors before they are admitted to the premises. In the playground, children are supervised by a rota of teaching staff, classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors.

SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM

The following are members of the schools Safeguarding team

- Chair of the Board of Governors (Mr Gary Lee)
- Designated Governor for Child Protection (Mr Stephen Watson)
- Designated Teacher (Mrs Karen Moore)
- Deputy Designated Teacher (Mr Ian Mills)
- Principal (Mrs Jane Clarke)

Procedures

Aughnacloy Primary School recognizes their main responsibilities in the areas of

- Prevention
- Recognition
- Response
- Referral
- Confidentiality/Record Keeping

Parents will be made aware of the school's responsibilities and procedures every two years and we hope that they will support us in our practice.

Prevention

We offer a supportive environment to all children in the belief that all children are vulnerable.

The school has developed and provides 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 School'

The 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 pro-social skills, breaking the cycle of abusive behaviour.

The Board of Governors ensures that the school has and follows the Code of Practice for the conduct of all staff (teaching, non-teaching) towards the pupils attending the school. The Code of Practice covers all activities organized in and by the school, whether on school premises or elsewhere.

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

RECOGNITION

Categories of Abuse

The categories of abuse which have been adopted by the Southern Area Child Protection Committee are as follows

- Potential physical abuse
- Suspected physical abuse
- Confirmed physical abuse
- Potential sexual abuse
- Suspected sexual abuse
- Confirmed sexual abuse
- Potential neglect
- Physical neglect
- Potential emotional abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Domestic Violence

Recognition of Child Abuse (Signs and Symptoms)

The detection of abuse is often very difficult and seldom clear-cut. Usually detection is like building a jigsaw. That is why it is important to share vague concerns with other professionals such as the school's Designated Teacher, S.E.L.B's Education Welfare Officer and Senior Social Worker for the area.

Teachers see individual children over prolonged periods and can notice physical behavioural indicators that may be evidence of abuse. No child will demonstrate all signs simultaneously. None of them individually or in any combination conclusively indicate child abuse. However, such signs are not inconsistent with abuse and where there is no other convincing explanation, the possibility of abuse cannot be ruled out.

All school staff teaching and non-teaching, must be aware of the definition of a 'child in need' and 'child abuse' in order to recognize and respond to it.

We use the following definition for 'Child Abuse'.

Neglect- the persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including an inorganic failure to thrive.

Domestic Violence

Children can witness domestic violence in a variety of ways. For example, they may be in the same room and may get caught in the middle of an incident, perhaps in an effort to make the violence stop; they may be in another room but be able to hear the abuse or see a parent/guardian's physical injuries following an incident of violence; or they may be forced to take part in verbally abusing the victim. Children are completely dependent on the adults around them, and if they do not feel safe in their own homes, this can have many negative physical and emotional effects. All children witnessing domestic violence are being emotionally abused, and this is now recognised as 'significant harm'.

Physical - physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual - the sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult's or another young person's 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.

Bullying -

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our 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.

Any complaint made by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the designated teacher for child protection and team action will be taken to protect the victim. A parent making the complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher, indicating the investigation that has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures described below.

RESPONSE

Procedures for Reporting Suspected (or Disclosed) Child Abuse

- a) **The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs Moore In her absence, Mr Ian Mills Deputy Designated teacher, will assume responsibility for child protection matters.**
- b) **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.**
- c) **She should not investigate- this is a matter for the Social Services- but should report these concerns to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with her and make full notes. The designated teacher will plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made.**
- d) **The Principal, Mrs J Clarke and designated teacher Mrs Moore may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Board's designated Officer 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 on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.**
- e) **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the Principal/designated teacher will inform**
 - **Social Services - making referral on Form ACPC7.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
 - **The S.E.L.B 's Designated Officer for Child Protection** of the school's suspicions and the action that has been taken. The Principal/Designated Teacher will also forward him a copy of the referral form sent to Social Services.

(This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL- CHILD PROTECTION)

Where the suspected abuse is discovered by the Education Welfare Officer or the Educational Psychologist, he or she will inform the Designated teacher and Mrs A Barr. Social Services will be informed by Mrs A. Barr.

Allegations against a member of staff:

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal should be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher). 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. The chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

Allegations against the Principal

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

How a parent can make a complaint

I have a concern about my child's safety

I can talk to the class teacher

If I am concerned I can talk to
the designated teacher for child protection

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Principal

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the
Chairman of the Board of governors

At any time a parent can talk to:
A social worker at the Gateway Team
Tel: 028 3741 5285
or the
PSNI at the Child Abuse Investigations Unit
Tel: 0845 600 8000

Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

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 this information with other professionals. However only those who need to know will be told.

All records, information and confidential notes are kept in separate files in a locked drawer. These records are kept separate from the pupil's individual report.

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral and/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.

REFERRAL

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCESS

A Social Worker will advise the Police and consult with appropriate persons whose knowledge of the child and family is relevant. A joint strategy for investigation will be agreed between Social Services and the Police. The purpose of the investigation is to establish the relevant factual circumstances of the child and the possible sources of harm or danger.

Matters which must be decided by the investigative agencies i.e. PSNI, Social Services, NSPCC include:

- i. What action, if any is necessary, immediately to protect the child or other children in the household and who will be responsible for this?
- ii. Whom to interview.
- iii. Who will conduct each of the interviews?
- iv. The timing of the interviews.
- v. Where the interviews will be conducted?
- vi. Is a medical examination appropriate at this stage?

Each person responsible for any part of the investigation must be clear about these arrangements.

CHILD PROTECTION CASE CONFERENCES

When initial investigations have been completed a decision will be taken by Social Services in consultation with other services on the need to convene a case conference.

A case conference is a multi-disciplinary meeting convened to share information on a possible or confirmed case of child abuse, to assess risk and where appropriate to formulate an inter-agency child protection plan. While attendance at a conference is voluntary, the school may find it beneficial and so acquire a wider overview of the child's circumstances. A school's contributions may be made through a written report to the chairperson.

It is recommended that the school be represented by the Designated Teacher or the Principal rather than the class teacher.

Case conferences follow a sequence:

- i. Initial Case Conferences- convened as soon as possible but normally within seven days of referral.
- ii. Assessment Review Case Conference- convened within the following three months
- iii. Review Case Conference- convened at least every 6 months thereafter until the child is de-registered.

If a child's name is placed on the Child Protection register, an Interagency Child Protection Plan is drawn up. Schools will be informed of registration and also, later, when a decision to de-register the child is taken.

A school shall also be informed when a child is placed on the Register because of circumstances outside the knowledge of the school. When a child whose name is on the Register changes school, the new school will be informed of the fact. Schools should share this information with the school's Education Welfare Officer. This information should also be shared with the school's medical team.

The Child Protection Register is a central index system, which records the names of children who meet the criteria for registration and are currently the subject of an Inter-Agency Child Protection Plan.

Professionalism

At any type of case conference, teachers should offer only professional opinions based on their knowledge and experience as teachers. All opinions must be based on facts and be objective. Opinions should not be given on any other issues.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

The class teacher's role:

What to do if a child tells you about abuse:

❖ **Receive**

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said
- Take notes

❖ **Reassure**

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable for e.g. Don't make promises you may not be able to keep, like 'I'll stay with you' or 'Everything will be alright now'
- Don't promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer. Explain to the child that you will need some help to deal with what he has told you.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it, e.g. you should say 'You're not to blame'. 'You're not alone, you're not the only one this sort of thing has happened to'

❖ **React**

- React to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but don't interrogate for full details.
- Don't ask leading questions e.g. what did he/she do next? (This assumes he/she did) or 'Did he/she touch your private parts?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence and the child's in any later prosecution in court.
- Do ask 'OPEN' questions like 'Anything else to tell me?' 'And?'
- Do not criticize the perpetrator; the child may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible.

- Do not explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk. Try to see the matter through yourself and keep in contact with the child. Ensure that if a Social Services interview is to follow that the child has a 'support person' present if the child wishes it (possibly yourself).

❖ Record

- Make some notes at the time on any paper that comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy these original notes.
- Record the date, time, places any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper words' Any injuries or bruises noticed may be recorded on a diagram showing position and extent.
- Record statements and observable things rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'
- Note down when the suspicions were reported and to whom.

❖ Refer

- Refer to the designated teacher Mrs Karen Moore
- In her absence, Mr Ian Mills (Deputy Designated teacher)

❖ Remember

- To follow your Southern Area Child Protection Guidelines. Consult as appropriate.

❖ Relax

- Try to get some support for yourself.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

1. Private Meetings with Pupils.

- i) Staff should be aware of the dangers that may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognized that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access or with the door open.
- ii) Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign to indicate that the room is in use but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- iii) Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

- i) As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- ii) It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- iii) Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. This would apply in a case where a teacher had been obliged to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self-injury.

- iv) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- v) Parents are sent a note from school requesting permission to change their child in school as there may be occasion for this e.g. wetting/soiling themselves. There must be two adults present when the child is changing and each child should be able to change their own clothes under supervision. (*See Intimate Care Policy*)
- vi) Staff who have to administer first aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that 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. (See First Aid Policy)***
- vii) Any physical contact that would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- viii) Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his or her actions have been or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the Principal.
- ix) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in an approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

❖ **Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

- i) Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives of choice.
- ii) When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger of their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticized. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents/Governors when proposing to use materials in connection with sex education programmes.

- iii) If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

❖ **Relationships and Attitudes**

Within the Pastoral Care policies of the school and the employing authority, staff should 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 comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanor and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

STAFF INSERVICE

The school is committed to on-going training for all staff. All staff will receive general training on Policy and Procedures with Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher and Principal receiving Level 2 and level 3.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING

The Safeguarding Team will discuss all current Child Protection issues on a regular basis. The Board of Governors (who have reviewed and approved this policy) will also be advised of relevant Child protection issues at regular intervals during the course of the school year. Specific details will not be shared with the Governors and confidentiality will be maintained. The Safeguarding Team will review this policy annually and advise Governors and parents of changes when necessary. All parents will receive a summary (in the form of a pamphlet) once every two years outlining the basic Child Protection Procedures and Policy.

CONCLUSION

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgment will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about point in this booklet or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult the Principal.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/ young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

Review date -December 2014

Contacts and Helplines

SELB Designated Officer for Child Protection
Kathryn Anderson
02838341975

***SELB Gateway Team -
Lisnally House,
Lisnally Lane,
Armagh,
BT61 7HW
028 3741 5285***

Police Service of Northern Ireland	0845 600 8000
Child Abuse Investigation Units	
E District (Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Portadown, Lurgan, Newry, Reathfriland) Banbridge Polcie Station	
Dective Inspector William McCallum	0845 600 8000 x40392
Dective Sergeant Rosie Lockhart	0845 600 8000 x36070

NSPCC
0800 800 5000

Childline (UK)
www.childline.org.uk
0800 1111