

Holy Family Primary School
Magherafelt



CHILD PROTECTION

**POLICY STATEMENT
(SUMMARY)**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- At all times, there must be a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach to commitment to protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm.
- Each agency involved must have an understanding of each other's professional values and accept each other's role, powers and responsibilities.
- Any actions taken by agencies must be considered and well informed so that they are sensitive to and take account of the child's gender, age, stage of development, religious culture and race.
- The right of confidentiality for parents, carers, teachers and children must be respected and information will only be shared in the interests of the child's welfare.

It is the policy of Holy Family P. S. Magherafelt to educate all our children in an environment in which they themselves feel safe and secure.

CHILD ABUSE

Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer, an acquaintance or a stranger who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both. The abuse may take a number of forms including:

Neglect

Physical Injury

Sexual Abuse

Emotional Abuse

In Holy Family P. S. **bullying** is also viewed as a form of abuse and the prevention of bullying will be approached in a very positive way mainly through the religious education programme and class discussions where necessary.

All staff are in a position to observe symptoms of abnormality which may be due to a variety of other causes but may also suggest child abuse. Examples of abnormality might include:

- bruising, showing the mark of a regular shape or the mark of a hand or other recognizable marks such as burns or bites.
- Indicators of physical neglect including obvious malnutrition, inadequate clothing or poor growth rate. Emotional abuse may result in excessive dependence or abnormal amounts of attention-seeking.
- Sexual abuse may be more difficult to recognise, but it can lead to substantial behavioural changes including withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour of inappropriate conversations.

PHOTOGRAPHIC & MEDIA COVERAGE

It is common place for schools to be involved in public relations exercises and this can often include children having their photograph taken with a school team or as part of a school activity. Also children's photographs will be taken and used for a variety of reasons. These may include school photographer, school displays, school website or as part of project work. The school will from time to time video children as they take part in school events or school performances.

If it is the wish of any parent, not to have their child's image used or stored via any of the above mentioned media, the school must be informed in writing so that any such children can be withdrawn from these events at the appropriate time.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED ABUSE

All teachers and assistants/helpers will be subject to the appropriate background checks and guidelines issued to all staff in relation to their behaviour towards the children.

The following procedures on child protection will ensure that all staff have clear guidance on the action, which is required when abuse of a child is suspected or disclosed. Bullying is also a distressing form of abuse and is dealt with in our discipline policy.

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff or staff have concerns about possible abuse the matter will immediately be reported to the **Designated Teacher**. The matter will be recorded, signed and dated. The Principal may seek advice and consult with the **N.E.E.L.B. Designated Officer** for Child Protection, the **Deputy Designated Officer** or the **Education & Welfare Officer**.

If it is decided that in the best interests of the child there is enough evidence to make a referral contact should be made with;

If an arrestable offence (physical and sexual abuse are arrestable offences) is suspected the **P.S.N.I. Care Unit, Magherafelt** will be notified

Unless there are concerns that either parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately. A copy of any such referral will be forwarded to **N.E.E.L.B. and C.C.M.S.**

Contact Personnel.

School Designated Teacher:	Mrs. C. Mulholland
School Deputy Designated Teacher:	Mr. P. Donnelly
N.E.E.L.B. Designated Officer:	Mrs. M. Devenney
Education & Welfare Officer:	Mr. J. Scullin

It should be noted that any information given to members of staff regarding possible child abuse cannot be held in confidence. Such information must be processed in the proper manner.

A copy of this Child Protection Policy has been agreed by the Board of Governors and a summary will be issued to all employees and parents of Holy Family P.S. Magherafelt.

This document reflects the guidance given in the document ‘Pastoral Care in Schools, Child Protection 1999/10’ and the CCMS circular ‘Child Protection’.

It should be noted that CCMS indemnifies its employees who act in accordance with these procedures in reporting any incident of child abuse or suspected child abuse.

CHILD PROTECTION SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES

Designated Teacher: Mrs. C. Mulholland
Deputy Designated Teacher: Mr. P. Donnelly

