



Stonepark NS
Longford
Phone 043 3346036 email stoneparkns@eircom.net
November 2016

Child Protection Policy of Stonepark N.S.

The Board of Management of Stonepark NS recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of Stonepark NS has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of this overall child protection policy.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Ms Meriel McCord
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Deputy Mrs Deirdre Mulligan
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Stonepark NS will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will:

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult or pupil with a special vulnerability.

5. This Child Protection Policy is to be adhered to in conjunction with other policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection, such as:

1. Code of Behaviour
2. Anti-Bullying Policy
3. Administration of Medication
4. Substance Use Policy
5. Data Protection
6. Special Education Needs
7. Acceptable Usage Policy
8. Enrolment Policy.



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The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

Toileting and Intimate Care

Children with SNA care will be cared for fully by the SNA where there are toileting needs. In the event that the child's assigned SNA is absent, parental consent will be sought to confirm their support for Principal/Deputy Principal's discretion in assigning an alternate SNA from the school to attend and support to the child's needs. In the event that a child in the class has a toileting accident, the parent will be contacted as soon as possible. The child will be supplied with dry clothing and where possible, they will change themselves. If needs be, and in the event that the parent is not contactable, two members of staff will support the child. A record shall be kept by the class teacher with details of the event.

Garda Vetting/Recruitment of Staff

All staff and members of the public who will be engaged to work with the pupils, will be Garda vetted prior to this engagement (as per Circular 63/2010)

Behaviour

Children are to be encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

Changing for Games/PE/Swimming

Where changing facilities are available, children will change together supervised in a discrete manner by a teacher. Staff will avoid assisting children with anything of a personal nature. Two members of staff will support a child if a particular need arises. If a child has a particular need in this area, a parent will be invited to join the activity and support their own child.

Supervision of Children

Staff will never transport children in their own cars. In the event that a child is left uncollected, every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian. If they are uncontactable, a taxi will be called and a member of staff will travel with the child home. A record of the event will be kept. Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school yard. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or behind sheds where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the school yard or to engage with individuals who are outside of the school yard. All contact must be accessed through the teacher on duty. Where the school is aware that there is a court order in place which prevents someone from having access to a child, a copy of that order shall be requested.

One-to-one Teaching

All rooms utilised for one-to-one teaching are fitted with glass panels to ensure visibility. Alternately the door will be left open.



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Medication/First Aid

All staff will be trained (Dec 2016) in Basic Life Support which covers asthma, cuts and bruises, shock, choking, anaphylactic shock, de-fib usage and cardiac arrest. All staff have received training in the application of epi-pens. In the event of a child needing an epi-pen available, the pen will be provided by the parent and stored in the classroom of the child. There are two first aid stations onsite, one located by the Principal's office and one inside the third class classroom. Where a child requires access to an inhaler, when the child is capable of storing and using this by themselves, this will be facilitated by the school with parental consent. Otherwise, the inhaler will be stored by the classroom teacher and given to the child as need arises. Ongoing medical needs will be agreed with the parents at the outset of the year. Where incidental medical needs arise, parents are requested to inform class teacher of such. If a medical need arises during the school day, parents will be contacted and staff will support the needs of the child.

Visitors/Guest Speakers

Teachers on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the school yard and will ascertain their intentions. Visitors entering the school should report to a member of staff. They will be supervised in the discharge of their business. Visitors and Guest Speakers will be vetted prior to engaging with the school (as per Circular 63/2010). The class teacher will remain present at all times (as per Circular 22/2010).

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff

The DLP/Deputy DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of this policy and the Children First Guidelines (1999).

Attendance

With regards to child protection we will pay particular attention to trends in non- attendance. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/ physical/ emotional abuse.

Further information and Best Practice guidelines can be accessed in the Appendix 1.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request and accessible on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____[date]

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: September 2017



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Appendix 1

Below is a summary of Procedural Policy and Principles of Best Practice in relation to Child Protection:

The school aims to provide its pupils with the highest standards of care and protection, in order to promote each child's well-being and safeguard him/her from harm while in the school.

The Board of Management of Stonepark N.S. has adopted the "Children First" National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Department of Children & Youth Affairs) and the "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools" of the Department of Education & Skills 2011. It is important that all members of staff are knowledgeable in Child Protection procedures. Ongoing regular training both formal and informal will be given to all staff at our school.

4.1 Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The Principal Ms McCord will act as DLP. Ms Deirdre Mulligan is Deputy DLP. The DLP and Deputy DLP have specific responsibility for child protection and will represent the school in all dealings with HSE, An Garda Síochána and other parties in connection with allegations of abuse. All matters pertaining to the processing or investigation of child abuse should be processed through the DLP and the Principal. The DLP should ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and undertake any training considered necessary to keep themselves updated on new developments.

4.2 Prevention

The Stay Safe Programme is the Primary Resource used in this school to provide education for children on abuse prevention. The programme is taught as part of the school's SPHE curriculum under the Strand Unit Safety & Protection.

4.2.1 Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

A child means a person under the age of 18 years of age, excluding a person who is or has been married. Types of child abuse 'Children First' Chapter 2 page 8

1. Neglect (Paragraph 2.2)
2. Emotional Abuse (Paragraph 2.3)
3. Physical Abuse (Paragraph 2.4)
4. Sexual Abuse (Paragraph 2.5)

4.2.2 Basis for reporting concerns and Standard Reporting Procedure

All signs and symptoms must be examined in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances.

There are commonly three stages in the **identification of child abuse**. "Children First" Paragraph 2.7 Page 10-11

These are: -

- Considering the possibility
- Looking out for signs of abuse
- Recording of information



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4.2.3 Children with additional vulnerabilities

Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others, such as those with disabilities, who are homeless, and those who are separated from their family. ('Children First Paragraph 2.8)

4.3 Handling Disclosures from Children

When information is offered in confidence the member of staff will need to act with sensitivity in responding to the disclosure. The member of staff will need to reassure the child, and retain his/her trust, while explaining the need for action and the possible consequences, which will necessarily involve other adults being informed. It is important to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anyone else. The welfare of the child is regarded as the first and paramount consideration. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved. No judgemental statement should be made about the person against whom the allegation is made. The following advice is offered to school personnel to whom a child makes a disclosure of abuse.

- Remain calm.
- Listen to the child with sensitivity and openness.
- Take all disclosures seriously
- Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises.
- Do not stop a child recalling significant events
- Do not over react
- Explain that further help may have to be sought
- Record the discussion accurately and retain the record of dates, times, names, locations context and factual details of conversation.

This information should then be passed onto the DLP and a record will be retained in the school. If the reporting person or member of the school staff and the DLP is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion/allegation, the procedures for reporting as laid out in '**Children First**' (2011) **Section 3.4 page 14** will be adhered to.

The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed before the DLP makes contact with the relevant authorities unless the situation demands that more immediate action to be taken for the safety of the child in which case the Chairman may be informed after the report has been submitted. Any Professional who suspects child abuse should inform parents/carers if a report is to be submitted to the HSE or An Garda Síochána unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and a duty social worker is unavailable, An Garda Síochána should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending HSE intervention.



Stonepark NS
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November 2016

4.4 Allegations against School Employees

The most important consideration for the Chairperson, Board of Management, Principal or the DLP is the safety and protection of the child. However, employees also have a right to protection against claims which are false or malicious.

As employers, the Board of Management should always seek legal advice as the circumstances can vary from one case to another.

There are two procedures to be followed:

- i. The Reporting Procedure
- ii. The Procedure for dealing with the Employee.

The DLP has responsibility for reporting the matter to the HSE. The Chairperson, Board of Management has responsibility, acting in consultation with his/her Board, for addressing the employment issues. If the allegation is against the DLP, the Deputy DLP will assume the responsibility for reporting the matter to the HSE.

4.5 Reporting Concerns and Standard Reporting Procedures regarding Employees

When an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee, the DLP should immediately act in accordance with the procedures outlined in 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' of the Department of Education & Skills 2011' Chapter 3.

A written statement of the allegation should be sought from the person/agency making the report. The DLP should always inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

School employees, other than the DLP who receive allegations against another school employee, should immediately report the matter to the DLP. School employees who form suspicions regarding conduct of another school employee should consult with the DLP. The procedures outlined will then be followed.

The Chairperson of the Board and DLP should make the employee aware privately

- a) That an allegation has been made against him/her
- b) The nature of the allegation
- c) Whether or not the HSE or Gardaí has been/will be/must be/should be informed.

The employee should be given a copy of the written allegation and any other relevant documentation. The employee should be requested to respond to the allegation in writing to the Board of Management within a specified period and told that this may be passed to the Gardaí, HSE, and legal advisers.

The priority in all cases is that no child be exposed to unnecessary risk. Therefore, as a matter of urgency, the Chairperson should take any necessary protective measures. These measure should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee in any way unless to protect the child.

If the nature of the allegations warrants immediate action in the Chairperson's opinion, the Board of Management should be convened to consider the matter. The Board will consider feedback if any has been received from the HSE, Gardaí or relevant source. This may result in the Board of Management directing that the employee absent him/herself from the school forthwith while the matter is being investigated (Administrative Leave). When the Board of Management is unsure as to whether this should occur, advice should be sought from the Gardaí and/or the Child Care Manager of the HSE and the legal advisers to the Board of Management.



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November 2016

4.6 Administrative Leave

Should the Board of Management direct that the employee absent him/herself as above, such absence of the employee would be regarded as administrative leave of absence with pay and not suspension and would not imply any degree of guilt. The DES should be immediately informed.

4.7 Board of Management

The Chairperson should inform the Board of Management of all the details and remind the members of their serious responsibility to maintain strict confidentiality on all matters relating to the issue and the principles of due process and natural justice.

5.0 Principles of Best Practice

This section is not an exhaustive list but a guide to best practice which is carried out in our school:

5.1 Toileting / Intimate Care

Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs. Normally a child who has specific toileting needs will have a special needs assistant assigned to him/her. It is very important that, before the child is enrolled in the school, a meeting is held at which all school personnel involved with the child attend along with the child's parents/guardians. At that meeting the needs of the child should be addressed and agreement reached as to how the school can meet those needs. It is important that those involved with the intimate care of the child agree practices which are acceptable to the staff, the child and the parents. Practices agreed should be sufficiently flexible to cover unforeseen situations, e.g. if personnel involved in assisting the child are absent. The Board of Management are made aware of practices agreed.

5.2 Toileting 'Accidents'

Toileting accidents are not uncommon, particularly at junior level, and it is therefore prudent that our school address how these situations will be dealt with in the school. Parents may not be in a position to come to the school immediately should their child have a toileting accident and consideration has to be given to the implications of leaving a child unattended to in this situation. Unless there are very specific reasons why school staff should not attend to the child, procedures with which staff members are comfortable and which have due regard to minimising upset to the child should be agreed. A note will be kept of such incidents and parents will be informed

5.3 Changing for Games / PE and Swimming

Often we can avoid difficulties in this area by requesting parents to ensure that children wear suitable clothing for games/PE and swimming e.g. shoes with 'Velcro' fastenings and clothes that children can change easily. However, in activities that require children to change clothing, appropriate steps are taken to ensure that reasonable protection is afforded to the children and staff members involved. Due regard needs to be given to the potential health, safety and abuse concerns.

To that end the Board of Management ensures that:

- a balance is struck between the child's right to privacy and adequate supervision with due regard to gender issues
- where children need assistance with changing agreement is reached between parents and staff as to how best those needs can be met
- clear boundaries are set down if volunteers are involved in assisting with changing, supervision etc.
- boundaries will vary depending on age/needs of child and on the physical constraints
- parents are notified if volunteers are assisting children
- staff should avoid assisting children with anything of a personal nature that the child can do for him/herself
- a report of any incident be made to the principal, parents and Board of Management, as appropriate.



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November 2016

At least two adults are present while children are changing for swimming or at any 'out-of-school' event....usually a teacher and an SNA. Specifically in relation to the Mall Swimming Pool, the children's group changing facilities will be supervised. If this is not possible the children will be directed to the cubicle changing areas.

5.4 Supervision of Children

Our staff have agreed arrangements for the recording of accidents or incidents that take place while children are under their supervision. This will be written into the Incident & Accident Book in the Medical Room

Inadequate supervision can contribute to greater opportunities for peer abuse, bullying and victimisation. Other areas that we consider are the administering of First Aid, the possible implications of taking children alone on journeys and the collection of children by someone unknown to staff.

In relation to school tours and outings, the ratio of adult to child should be 10:1 with a minimum of two adults travelling.

If we are aware of a court order being in place which prevents someone from having access to a child, a copy of that order is requested by the school.

In the event of the parent/guardian's non-compliance with the court order the Gardaí will be summoned to the school to enforce it.

5.5 One-to-one teaching

If it is deemed appropriate for an individual, one-to-one teaching is provided. Our school weighs up the benefits of this against the possible disadvantages in relation to a child protection issue. Every effort is made to ensure the protection of children and staff. Clear boundaries are put in place regarding physical environment (e.g. vision panel in door), seating arrangements, proper timetabling etc. If a child needs learning support or one-to-one teaching parents are advised of any arrangements in place.

5.6 Visitor/Guest Speakers

Visitors and guests are not left alone with children. The school principal is responsible to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the content/material in use is appropriate.

5.7 Internet Safety

Child protection concerns are addressed in the school's Acceptable Use Policy. This policy deals with issues relating to use of the Internet at school, such as access or use of children's photos.

Many aspects of Child Protection policy require regular review and this is especially true of technological issues. It sometimes seems that, by the time we understand the Child Protection implications of a new technology, it has already moved on. It is important that our school community continues to aim at this moving target.

NB www.webwise.ie

5.8 Use of Mobile Phones & Electronic devices



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November 2016

The spirit of our policy dealing with Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices is that pupils should not bring mobile phones to school or to school related off site activities. Further detail relating to this policy can be found in our policy on “Use of Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices”

5.9 Photographs / Media / magazines

Our school has many requests to photograph the children – for example in a sporting context or event, by local media for articles, etc. Photographs of our pupil’s are never labelled by way of using the child’s name so that the child can be identified from the photograph. Similarly in school, photos of the children around the school will never have names attached. Parental permission is sought upon enrolment. All school photos are allowed to be taken at the discretion of the Principal and the Board of Management.

5.9.1 Vulnerable Children

Research has shown that children with special educational needs are more vulnerable and consequently more at risk of becoming victims of abuse for reasons such as:

- Poor communication skills
- Limited sense of danger
- Need for intimate care
- Lack of mobility and greater reliance on adults
- Need for attention, friendship or affection
- Limited assertiveness and poorer self-confidence
- Limited understanding of sexuality or sexual behaviour
- Fear of not being believed

Our school will ensure that the personal safety education needs of all children with special educational needs are adequately met with due regard to the specific vulnerabilities of individual children.

The Stay Safe pack ‘Personal Safety Skills for Children with Learning Difficulties’(1996) was designed to supplement the Stay Safe mainstream pack to assist teachers with this work. A copy of this pack is held in the Resource Area or with the DLP.

Consideration is also given to how classwork can be supplemented by learning support and resource teachers, e.g. oral language, vocabulary development and communication work around the Stay Safe programme.

5.9.2 Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistants play a vital role in the everyday care of children with special educational needs. Awareness and training around child protection is provided for all Special Needs Assistants and other staff who have contact with children. See Policy on Special Needs Assistants.

This summary of Procedural Policy and Principles of Best Practice in relation to Child Protection will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.