

# Knockbreda Primary School Child Protection Policy



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# Knockbreda Primary School - Child Protection Policy

We in Knockbreda Primary School have a primary 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, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour 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 members of staff of our school have also adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards pupils. This Code is set out in the appendix to this policy statement.

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 overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

## **What is child abuse?**

We use 'the following definition:

**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 non-organic failure to thrive.

**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 own sexual gratification: the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities of any kind (including

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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 motional, 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 by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the designated teacher for child protection working with the Principal, teacher and any other staff member involved. Where it is ascertained that bullying is/has taken place then team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher within two weeks of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which 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 all 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.

## **Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse**

The Designated Teacher (DT) for child protection is Mrs. Allison Murphy. She has received training on the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures. In her absence Mrs. Pamela

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McKenna Deputy Designated teacher (DDT), will assume responsibility for Child Protection matters.

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.

She should not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services - but should report these concerns immediately to DT, discuss the matter with her and make full notes.

The DT will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.

The Principal, in consultation with the DT, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The Principal 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.

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

- The Social Services
- The Education and Library Board'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 (or DT, if she is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the DT). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact

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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.

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

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the DT.

If for whatever reason, a person feels that he/she cannot raise the matter with the DT or DDT then advice from a Board Officer should be sought.

### WHEN IN DOUBT ALWAYS ASK FOR ADVICE

- SEELB - 028 9056 6200
- Colum Boal, Designated Officer for Child Protection - 028 9056 6434
- Alison Casey, designated Officer for Child Protection - 028 9056 6274

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.

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## Access to the internet and Digital Recording Media

Use of the above has been carefully considered and is monitored at all times.

- The Internet permission form explains use of the Internet to parents.
- Parents must give permission before children are allowed to access the Internet.
- The Class 2K network in use in Knockbreda Primary School is protected and filtered. Children are unable to access unsuitable sites.
- Teacher guidance on the use of the Internet is provided to pupils. Children are warned about sites which may be deemed unsuitable.
- Use of the Internet is monitored at all times and supervised by a member of staff.
- Mobiles phones are not permitted for pupil use during school hours. Phones used in breach of this regulation will be retained by teacher until parent is contacted and then returned. Cameras on such phones are not permitted to be used in school **AT ANY TIME**.
- All parents/guardians are asked to indicate their preference regarding the use of photographs in school. They indicate whether their children's photographs may be used in school/ in the press/ on the school website etc. Teachers hold lists of parental choices.