***Child Protection: Policy & Procedures***

**Policy and Procedures on Child Protection**

We in De La Salle have a primary responsibility to safeguard, protect and promote the care, welfare and safety of children. This child-centred approach is based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children (Art. 12 UNCRC) and also what is in the best interests of the young person (Art. 3 UNCRC). This underpins the welfare of the child/young person as of paramount importance.

We will carry out this duty through our Pastoral Care Policy, which aims to provide a Christian, 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.

All staff and volunteers will be subject to appropriate background checks and adopt our Code of Conduct for behaviour towards pupils.

***Safeguarding*** is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and to protect them from harm.

***Child Protectio*n** is the intervention undertaken to protect a child who has been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that we have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The over-riding 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 problems 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 definitions:

**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.

**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 exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family values.

**Child Sexual Exploitation**

This is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/ or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (***DE Guidance Paragraph 6.2. ‘Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools’)***

**Exploitation:**

The intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

**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 must be vigilant to the possibility of bullying occurring and take steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to deal with the bully.

**Cyber bullying**:

Involves the use of ICT technologies such as e-mail, mobile phones, internet social sites, chat-rooms etc, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. The school will endeavour to enlist the support of parents to resolve any issues as parental support is essential to address this growing problem. This may also involve support from external agencies.

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

All staff have a responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of the pupils in De La Salle College. Within the school setting there is a key Governor and members of staff delegated specific responsibility for Child Protection.

**Designated Staff:**

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Ms Marian O’Neill (Vice Principal Pastoral Care). The Deputy Designated Child Protection Teachers are Mrs Máiread Healy, Mr John Stitt, Mrs Orla Rodgers, Mrs Veronica Hanna. The BOG with designated responsibility for Child Protection is Mrs Margaret Brady.

1. If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff which gives rise to concerns about the child, **the member of staff must act promptly.**
2. Do not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services - but report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, and make full notes using the College’s ‘Child Protection Concern Form’. (Appendix 1 of CP Policy)
3. The Designated Teacher 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 and stored securely.
4. The Designated Teacher, Ms M O’ Neill, in consultation with the principal (Mrs White) will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns or doubts that a young person is at risk, De La Salle College will seek advice from the Child Protection Team in the Education Authority. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately. If necessary Interpreting Services will be contacted to support Newcomer pupils/parents as appropriate.
5. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The Safety of the young person is our first priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Designated Teacher in consultation with the Principal will seek advice and guidance from:

* Education Authority’s (Belfast Region) Designated Officer for Child Protection
* Social Services
* CCMS’ Designated Officer for Child Protection

It should be noted that information given to you about possible child abuse or potential harm cannot be held ‘in confidence’. In the interests of safeguarding the child, it may be necessary to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

**After a member of staff raises a CP concern**

Once a concern has been referred to the DT that is your responsibility fulfilled.  Any further communication or liaison with the staff member who has passed on the concern will be in keeping with their role and responsibilities. The concern will be taken forward by the relevant personnel and external agencies.

***Additional Information***

*The full Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available on the school website and additional training materials and ‘Appendix 1: Child Protection Concern Form’ are available in staff documents on C2K. All staff will be provided with updated CP/SG training at the start of each academic year.*

***Covid adjustment:*** *When operating in a remote learning environment,**the* ***School Website*** *is a useful source of additional safeguarding information for pupils, parents and staff.**Regular monthly updates and helpful information including signposting additional services and support.*

***Dealing with Disclosures (5Rs)***

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* **Receive**: Listen actively, open body language, accept, non-judgemental. TED (Tell, Explain, Describe)
* **Reassure**: ‘You’ve done the right thing by coming to me’, re-assure child that you have listened and hear what they are saying; don’t promise what can’t be delivered.
* **Respond:** Tell what you are going to do and do it. Ensure child is ok before leaving.
* **Report:** As soon as possible, to the DT.
* **Record:** Vital – facts, no opinions – When? Where? Who? What?

**A Child’s Needs Following Disclosure**

* To be safe
* To be given the opportunity to express and explore feelings
* To develop a sense of belonging
* To be treated as ‘normal’
* To learn about relationships and boundaries of behaviour
* Help to restore ability to form relationships
* To be with adults who show they can be trusted
* To develop a sense of self-worth

**What to do if you are unable to speak to one of the Designatedor Deputy Designated Teachers:**

***In this situation phone:***

* Mrs C. White, Principal
* Ms M. O’Neill, Vice Principal Pastoral Care

***In an emergency with no access to the Principal/VP/SLT/ DT/DDTs and if a child is in immediate danger or at immediate risk then contact:***

* Social Services: **028 90507000**, (Belfast Gateway Team).
* Police: **028 90 650222**, (PSNI Care Unit).
* Out of hours duty Social Worker: **02895 049999,** (Belfast Trust).

**De La Salle College**

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***Information for Staff 2021/2022***

***Information for Staff2019/2020***

**“Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.”**

*Dr Rita F Prevson*