



Stepping Stones

Special School for Children
with Autism & Complex Needs

Child Protection Policy



8. B. Child Protection Policy

Section 4.2 Child Protection Introductory statement

The Board of Management 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 Stepping Stones School has agreed the following Child Protection Policy.

- 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.

This policy addresses the responsibilities of the School in the following areas:

- A.** PREVENTION - curricular provision.
- B.** PROCEDURES - procedures for dealing with concerns and disclosures.
- C.** PRACTICE - best practice in child protection.

A copy of this Policy document and a copy of the Department of Education and Science 'Child protection Procedures' will be available to all the staff in the Principal's office.

It is incumbent on all the staff to familiarise themselves with the Children First 2011- National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, and the DES Child Protection Procedures.

Aims

In its policies, practices and activities, Stepping Stones Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs 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, and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters
- the School will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

There are a number of Schools policies, practices, and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection including: Code of Behaviour and the Anti-bullying policy.

These will be reviewed and policies will be added as necessary.

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.

A. 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 Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum under the strand unit Safety and Protection.

The main objectives of the programme will be to develop children's self-esteem, assertiveness, and self-protective skills wherever possible among many other things. The resources available may vary but the main source will be the Stay Safe programme. As a school we will use 'Making the Links' to aid our planning for SPHE. The Stay Safe programme should be taught in its entirety under the section 'personal safety' of the Safety and Protection strand unit.

We are aware of the individuality and needs of all our pupils, therefore the sensitive programmes will be delivered on an individual basis, with a programme tailored made to the level of ability and understanding of every student.

Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible.

Parental involvement is a key element in the implementation of the Stay Safe Programme.

Parents will be informed of the School Policy in relation to the teaching of the Stay Safe Programme and other sensitive areas.

On enrolment of their child parents will be informed that the Stay Safe Programme is in

use in the school and a copy of the 'Stay Safe: A parent's Guide' provided if available.

We also believe meetings with parents are essential.

Parents retain the right to withdraw their child/ren from the sensitive aspects of SPHE.

There are a number of considerations to make plans for:

1. With parental agreement the Programme will be taught on an individual basis to tailor the needs and understanding of every pupil in school. Parents have the choice to withdraw their child/ren from the sensitive aspects of the SPHE curriculum.
2. If a teacher opts out of teaching the sensitive aspects of the SPHE curriculum, other arrangements will need to be put into place. The teacher will still do the planning and individual lessons for the specific student, and other member of the staff can deliver the curriculum.

B. PROCEDURES

All staff in Stepping Stones School will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs document: Children First (2011) and the Department of Education and Science document: 'Child Protection Procedures'.

The staff and the management of this school have agreed that:

- all concerns/disclosures involving child protection welfare issues will be reported in the first instance to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) where appropriate.
- each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making that report.
- a strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality- information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should be given on a 'need to know' basis.

1. Responsibilities of all school personnel

1. The Board of Management has nominated a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) Maria Jose Corredor Saiz. This person is the designated Liaison person for the school in all dealings with health boards, An Garda Siochana, and other parties, in connection with allegations of abuse. Those other parties should be advised that they should conduct all matters pertaining to the processing or investigation of alleged child abuse through the Designated Liaison Person.
2. Where the Designated Liaison Person is unavailable for whatever reason, the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) who is Dolores Cullinane will act and follow procedure.
3. The Designated Liaison person should immediately inform the Board of Management that a report involving a pupil in the school has been submitted to the relevant health board.

Please note Appendixes 1 and 2 are standard forms to be completed by the staff member bringing up the concern.

C. PRACTICE

The staff and BOM of Stepping Stones School have identified the following areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and BOM have agreed that the following practices be adopted, regarding supervision during toileting, and community outings.

C.1 Toileting: Some of our pupils need to be supervised while in the toilet. The level of staff input varies from pupil to pupil.

When the toilet is within the same classroom, a member of the staff can toilet a pupil on his/her own, prior to inform another member of staff that he/she is about to do so. In the instance where a toilet is not located within the class the same procedure will apply.

C.2. Transitioning: Staff members can escort pupils from A to B within the school premises if this has been previously agreed with the classroom teacher and the activity e.g. using the OT room is specifically stated in the pupil's Individual Educational Plan (IEP), timetable etc...

C.3. Outings: If a pupil has a particular social programme, whereby he/she needs to leave the premises, 2 members of the staff will always accompany a pupil. No staff member is to go outside the premises on their own with a pupil.

Please note that the classroom teacher is responsible to ensure the safety of both, staff and pupils in their classroom. Ratios mentioned above could increase accordingly to the pupil's needs.

It is difficult to enumerate every possible case scenario; however, common sense and safety first are paramount.

D. REVIEW AND MONITORING.

This Policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

This Policy will be reviewed by the BOM on an annual basis and when the need arises. The BOM will ensure that adequate training/information and support is provided for all staff, parents, and BOM members.

Policy adopted by the BOM on:

Signed: Date:

Please print and sign or add a digital signature

(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date of next review:

APPENDIX 1

Standard form to be completed by the person who is bringing up the concern.

CHILD PROTECTION REPORT

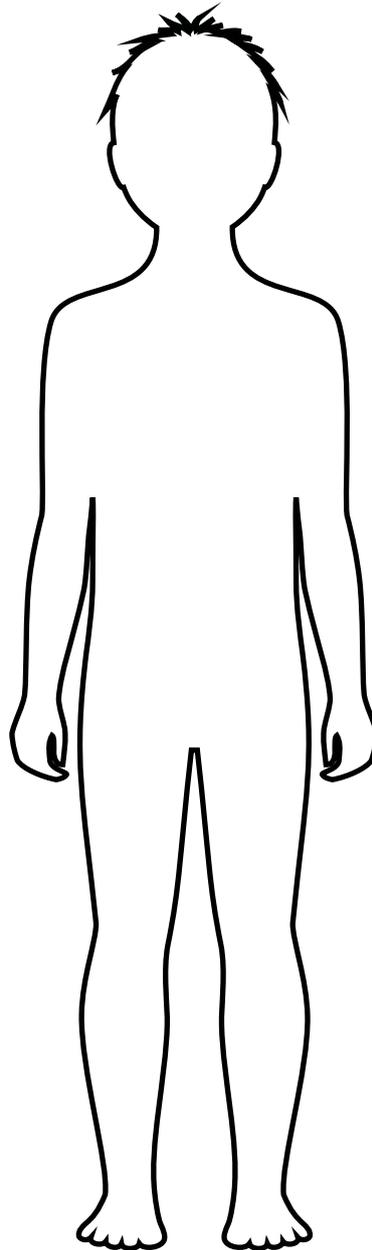
Code: Registration number of the child
Date:
Observation:
Signed: Please print and sign or add a digital signature

APPENDIX 2

Code:

Date:

Indicate signs of injury if necessary on outline below:





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Special School for Children
with Autism & Complex Needs

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