**Child Protection: Policy & Procedures**

**Policy and Procedures on Child Protection**

We in De La Salle have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. 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). 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 our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks and they have adopted our Code of Practice for their behaviour towards pupils.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teaching and non-teaching staff - has 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** 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:** is 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 our staff are 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:**

**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 teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about a child, **the member of staff will act promptly.**
2. He/she will not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services - but will report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, and make full notes using the College’s ‘Child Protection Concern Form’.
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 Marian 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 members of staff about possible child abuse or potential harm 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.

***The full Child Protection policy is available on the school website and can be provided in hard copy upon request from the school office.***

***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***

**De La Salle College**



**Information for Parents and Carers 2021/2022**

***How a Parent/Guardian can raise a concern or make a complaint:***

I have a concern about my/a child’s safety

I can talk to the class/Form Teacher/ Head of Year

If I am still concerned, I can talk to

*Designated Teacher for*

*Child Protection*

Ms Marian O’Neill

*Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection:*

Mrs M Healy Mrs O. Rodgers

Mrs V Hanna Mr J Stitt

If I am still concerned,

I can talk to the *Principal,*

Mrs Claire White

If I am still concerned,

I can talk/write to

Mr Tony McCusker

*Chairperson, Board of Governors*

If I am still concerned I can talk to the Public Service Ombudsman, NI Public Service, Telephone: 0800343424

*?? have to check this*

**De La Salle College**

**🕾 028 90508800**

**Parents and Carers 2019/2020**