

St Patrick's Girls' National School Child Protection Policy

June 2017

Signed copy is in the office

St Patrick's Girls' National School

Child Protection Policy

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 St. Patrick's Girls' National School 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
Mrs Eileen Kelly

3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is
Ms Yvonne Crosse

4. In its policies, practices and activities, St. Patrick's GNS 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.

5. This section lists school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection (See Appendix 1)

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.

6. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association (if any) 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.

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

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on Monday 8th May 2017 Copy in the Office

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Appendix 1

Title Child Protection Policy

· Introductory Statement

This policy was developed in consultation with representatives of the Board of Management, staff and parents of St. Patrick's Girls National School and adapted to reflect the Child Protection procedures October 2011.

· Rationale

St. Patrick's Girls' National School has adopted the Department of Education and Science guidelines and procedures as outlined in the following documents:

(a) **Children First 2011 – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children**

(b) *Children First* (Department of Health and Children: 1999)

(c) *Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures* (Department of Education and Science: 2001)

This policy states how St. Patrick's GNS proposes to implement these guidelines to ensure the protection and welfare of children attending our school.

· Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

St. Patrick's GNS aims to provide a happy, active and safe environment where pupils can develop to their full potential. The school aims to promote the well-being of all pupils and to safeguard them from harm. The Board of Management of our school has adopted the Children First 2011 – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, "Children First" Guidelines of the Department of Health and Children 2008 and the Child Protection Procedures of the Department of Education and Science 2001.

· Aims

To promote the safety, protection and welfare of all the pupils in the school.

To inform all members of the school community including Board of Management, teachers, pupils, parents, Special Needs Assistants, secretary and caretaker of the procedures in place in this school for dealing with all aspects of child protection.

To identify other policy areas which need to be amended

To identify curricular content and resources that contributes to the prevention of child abuse and to enable children to properly deal with abuse if it occurs.

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· Guidelines

St. Patrick's GNS follows the procedures as laid down in the Children First 2011 – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children in any case where we suspect, or alerted to child abuse.

The guidelines are laid out as follows:

1.0 Appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

2.0 Roles, Responsibilities and Guidelines

2.1 Role of the Board of Management

2.2 Role of the Staff Members (Teachers, SNAs, Caretaker, Secretary)

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2.3 Role of the Designated Liaison Person

3.0 Child Protection meetings /Case Conferences

4.0 Organisational Implications

5.0 Curriculum Implications

1.0 Appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- The Board of Management has appointed the school principal, Eileen Kelly, as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in St. Patrick's GNS. to have specific responsibility for child protection.
- The Board of Management has appointed the Deputy Principal, Yvonne Crosse, as Deputy DLP to take the place of the DLP if she is unavailable for whatever reason.
- The position of DLP will be addressed at the first meeting of each new Board of Management. The DLP will continue to act as such until such time as he/she is replaced by the BOM for whatever reason.
- The appointment of the DLP/Deputy DLP will be reviewed if there is a change in staffing, which effects the position of principal or deputy principal.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- The Board of Management has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of the pupils.
- The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection and welfare in the school.
- All staff have a general duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect children in the school

2.1 Role of the Board of Management (BOM)

- To arrange for the planning, development and implementation of an effective child protection programme
- To monitor and evaluate its effectiveness.
- To provide appropriate staff development and training

Specifically they will

- Appoint a DLP and deputy DLP.
- Have clear procedures for dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse
- Monitor the progress of children at risk.
- Ensure that curricular provision is in place for the prevention of child abuse.
- Investigate and respond to allegations of child abuse against one of the school's employees which have been reported to the Health Service Executive (HSE) or Gardaí.

- To decide on teachers' attendance at child protection meetings/case conferences and to advise teachers before attending such meetings/conferences.

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Procedures for BOM in cases of allegations or suspicions of child abuse by a school employee:

A. Reporting

In the event of receiving a complaint or suspicion re an employee:

- The DLP will immediately inform the chairperson.
- She will seek a written statement of the allegation from the person/agency making the allegation. Parents/Guardians may make a statement on behalf of a child.
- The DLP will seek advice from the relevant HSE and will take responsibility for reporting, based on this advice.
- If the DLP, following consultation with the HSE, decides that this matter is not for reporting, she must inform the Chairperson. They must then inform, in writing, the person or agency making the allegation, of the reasons for this decision. If this person or agency still has concerns, they are free to consult with or report to the relevant HSE or Gardaí on an individual basis. The provisions of the Protection for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 apply, once they report reasonably and in good faith.
- If the DLP, following consultation with the HSE, decides that this matter is for reporting she should inform the Chairperson, who should proceed in accordance with the procedures in the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES, 2001.
- The DLP/Deputy DLP completes a standard reporting form as comprehensively as is possible.
- When the Chairperson becomes aware of an allegation of abuse he will always seek legal advice and base his/her response on this advice.
- He will privately inform the employee of the fact and nature of the allegation and whether or not it has been reported by the DLP to the HSE. (Refer to 4.2 – 4.3, p.16 of Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES, 2001. The chairperson has a duty to afford the employee fairness and due process – s/he is entitled to details and a copy of the written allegation, to advice and representation and an opportunity to respond to the Board within a week.

Responding

- When the Chairperson becomes aware of an allegation of abuse he will always seek legal advice and base his response on this advice.
- The Chairperson will consider whether there is any risk to pupils' safety. If the Chairperson considers that there is a risk – he may require the employee to take immediate administrative leave. If unsure the chairperson will consult with the HSE/Gardaí.
- If administrative leave has been invoked, the chairperson will inform the DES. The HSE (in some cases the Gardaí) may also be notified in accordance with legal advice received.
- Once it is deemed necessary by the DLP and Chairperson to make a report (after receiving advice from the HSE) the Chairperson will convene and inform a meeting of the BOM as soon as possible.

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- Where the alleged abuse has taken place within the school, or relates to the abuse of pupils of the school, by school employees outside of school time, the BOM will investigate the matter. They will convene a further meeting, once the relevant information has been gathered. At this meeting the BOM will consider in detail
 - the allegations made and their source
 - the advice given by relevant authorities
 - the written responses of the employee.
- At this meeting also
 - the person/agency who is alleging abuse by the school employee should be offered an opportunity to present his/her case to the BOM and may be accompanied by another person
 - Parents/guardians may act on behalf of child
 - The employee should also be afforded an opportunity to present his/her case and may also be accompanied.
 - The BOM must deal with the matter sensitively and the employee must be fairly treated.
 - The BOM will make a decision on action, if any, based on their investigation and will inform the employee of this in writing. They will also inform the DES of the outcome, if the employee has been absent on administrative leave.
 - Where it is not possible for the BOM to conduct an enquiry into allegations (e.g. where abuse has occurred in past employment, or where the employee is undergoing investigation by relevant authorities), the Chairperson will act on advice of authorities. The Chairperson will maintain close contact with the HSE and receive reports and records from them where appropriate.

2.2 Role of the Staff Members (Teachers, SNAs, Caretaker, Secretary ...)

- The responsibilities of the staff of St. Patrick's Girls National School are as outlined in the following.
 - *Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES, 2001*
 - · Children First 2011 – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
 - *Chapter 2 Definition & Recognition of Child Abuse*
 - *Chapter 3 Basis for Reporting & Standard Reporting Procedures*
 - *Appendix 1 Signs and Symptoms Of Child Abuse*

Guidelines for teachers and staff members in handling Disclosures from children

Where a child discloses alleged abuse to a staff member, the person receiving that information should listen carefully and supportively. Great care must be taken not to abuse the child's trust. This should not be a formal interview.

The following advice is offered:

- Listen to the child.

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- 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.
- Confidentiality should not be assured - explain that further help may have to be sought.
- Record the discussion accurately noting
 - *What, where and when?*
 - *Descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries.*
 - *Explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate.*
- Retain the record securely.
- The staff member should obtain only necessary relevant facts. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to investigate allegations of abuse.
 - The DLP should then be informed and given relevant records.
 - If the suspected abuser is the DLP then the suspicion and any records will be passed on to the Chairperson who will proceed as per guidelines.

Suspicious of Abuse

- · Staff members who suspect abuse should refer to Children First 2011 – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children especially
 - *Chapter 2 :Definition & Recognition of Child Abuse*
 - *Chapter 3: Basis for Reporting and Standard Reporting Procedures*
 - *Appendix 1:Signs and Symptoms Of Child Abuse*
- Staff members should observe and record over time the dates, signs, symptoms, behaviour causing them concern.
- They should inform the DLP and pass on all records.

2.3 Role of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- The DLP acts as a liaison with outside agencies, HSE, Gardaí and other parties with child protection concerns
 - The DLP will inform all school personnel of the availability of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES and Children First Guidelines in the school. She will place the DES guidelines and Chapters 2 & 3 & Appendix 1 of the Children First procedures on the server and copies will be available in the staff room and office.
 - The DLP will be available to staff for consultation regarding suspicions or disclosures of abuse. She will keep records of these consultations.
 - The DLP will seek advice from the HSE.
 - The DLP will report suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the HSE or/and An Garda

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Síochána based on this advice.

- The DLP will maintain proper records in a secure, confidential manner and in a secure location.
- The DLP will keep up to date on current developments regarding child protection.

Guidelines for the DLP in handling reported concerns and disclosures

- Where the DLP/Deputy DLP have concerns about a child, but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, they should seek appropriate advice. To do this the DLP/Deputy should make informal contact with the assigned (on duty) Social Worker. The DLP/Deputy in this case, should be explicit that s/he is requesting advice and not making a report. If advised to report the matter, the DLP will act on that advice.
- A report will then be made to the HSE by the DLP/Deputy in person, by telephone or in writing. In the event of an emergency or non-availability of HSE staff, the report should be made to the Gardaí. The DLP should also report the matter to the Chairperson of the BOM,
 - who should then follow the procedures as outlined in Chapter 3 of Children First 2011 – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- A standard reporting form is completed by the DLP/Deputy as comprehensively as possible (See Appendix 1, Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES).
- Parents/guardians will normally be informed that a report is being made. It may be decided that informing the parent/carer is likely to endanger the child or place the child at further risk.

The decision not to inform the parent/carer should be briefly recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.

- When the allegation is against the DLP, the chairperson then assumes responsibility for reporting the matter to the HSE and filling in the standard reporting form.
- Where there are allegations or suspicions of Peer Abuse the DLP will follow the same procedures.
- Parents of all parties will be notified and the DLP will inform the Chairperson.
- Principal and class teachers will make arrangements to meet separately with all parents, to resolve the matter.
- The school will make arrangements to minimise the possibility of the abusive behaviour recurring.

3.0 Child Protection Meetings / Case Conferences

- A request is made from the HSE through the DLP who should consult with the Chairperson of the B.O.M. of the school. The Chairperson may seek clarification through the DLP as to why the attendance of the school employee is necessary and ascertain who else will be present.
- The school employee may complete a report for the meeting/conference. (See Appendix 3, Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES).
- The school employee will be advised if children/parents/guardians are going to be present. The school employee may contact the Chairperson of the Child Protection Meeting for

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advice.

- The school employee may keep a child's behaviour under closer observation, if requested to do so. This may include observing the child's behaviour, peer interactions, school progress or informal conversations.
- In all cases, individuals who refer or discuss their concerns about the care and protection of children with HSE staff, should be informed of the likely steps to be taken by the professionals involved. Where appropriate and within the normal limits of confidentiality, reporting staff will be kept informed about the outcomes of any enquiry or investigation following on from their report
- Teachers attending a child protection meeting/case conference should familiarise
 - themselves with the protocol outlined in Chapter 4 Children First 2011 – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children

4.0 Organisational Implications

School procedures already in place and new procedures being put in place will be examined with reference to the Children First Guidelines and any Child Protection issues that may arise will be addressed.

The following policies have been addressed in this review:

- *Accidents*
- *Attendance*
- *Behaviour*
- *Bullying*
- *Care Needs*
- *Children travelling in staff cars*
- *Induction Of Staff*
- *Record keeping*
- *School Tours/Outings/Sports Days*
- *Supervision*
- *Swimming*
- *Visibility*
- *Visitors*

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Accidents

While every precaution will be taken under our Health and Safety Statement to ensure the safety of children, we realise that accidents will happen. Teachers keep a copy of Accidents and a copy is kept in the office as part of Health and Safety.

Attendance

Our school attendance will be monitored as per our attendance policy. 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.

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Behaviour

Children are 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.

Bullying

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying policy. If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive then the matter will be referred to the DLP.

Care Needs

In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting/intimate care a meeting will be convened, after enrolment and before the child starts school, between parents/guardians, class teacher, SNA, principal and where appropriate the pupil. The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain the specific needs of the child and to determine how the school can best meet those needs. The staff to be involved in this care will be identified and provision will be made for occasions when the particular staff involved are absent. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file.

Clean clothing will be kept in schools so that if a child has an 'accident' of this nature they will in the first instance be offered fresh clothing into which they can change. If the pupil, for whatever reason, cannot clean or change herself and the parent/guardian cannot be contacted then the child will be assisted by members of the staff familiar to the child. In all such situations two members of staff should be present.

A record of all such incidents will be kept and principal and parents will be notified.

Children travelling in staff cars

Members of the school staff will not carry children alone in their cars at any time.

Communication

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral Language/RE programmes allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which is hoped will aid the pupil-teacher relationship. If teachers have to communicate with pupils on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open.

Induction of Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES, 2001 and Children First Guidelines, 1999. The DLP will give a copy of the Child Protection Policy. All new teachers are expected to teach the designated SPHE objectives for their class. Ms Eileen Lyons is responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and Ms Margaret Browne will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives. Ms Lyons is also responsible for ensuring that new teachers know how to fill in the roll book correctly and informing the teacher of record keeping procedures within the school.

One to One Teaching

Every effort will be made to ensure that this teaching takes in an open environment. Parents of children who are to be taught in one to one setting will be informed and their agreement sought.

Work being carried out by SNAs will be carried out under the direction of the class teacher in an open environment.

Record Keeping

Teachers will keep each child's file updated with results of assessments carried out, dates and details of meetings with parents and notes from parents. The records are kept in the

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bottom drawer of each teacher's desk which is locked at all times. Roll books will be updated daily. Sensitive information regarding children will be shared on a need-to-know basis. All educational files of pupils who no longer attend this school are kept in the filing cabinet in the principal's office for 5 years. Further details on record keeping are found in the school's Record Keeping Policy.

School Tours/Outings/Sports Days

Teachers monitor pupils using toilet facilities and encourage them to go these facilities in small groups rather than alone.

Appropriate clothing and foot wear should be worn for sporting activities.

While every effort is made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable a full record of the incident should be made and reported to principal and parents.

Supervision

The school's supervision policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks and before and after school.

Principal/deputy principal together with the teaching staff as part of the Haddington Road agreement will be involved before school supervision (see rota on staff notice board). A further rota will be displayed to cover mid morning and lunchtime breaks. See daily procedures policy for agreed rules around break-times, procedures around teacher absences. Pupils not collected at home time will be brought/go to the office and their parents/guardians will be contacted. Pupils wait at the office until collected.

Swimming

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for Games/PE/Swimming. Where assistance is needed by a child with specific/special needs then this will be given in the communal area and with the written consent of parents/guardians. Under no circumstances will any member of the staff /volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required the parent/guardian of the child will be asked to assist the child. Parents will assist with supervision in the changing rooms in order to ensure the children's safety. All adults will act in 'loco parentis' and as such will act as prudent parents in helping children to return to school as dry as possible. Parent helpers will be briefed on our swimming procedures.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school play ground. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or sheds where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the school play ground or to engage with adults who are outside of the school play ground.

Visitors

Teachers on play ground duty will be aware of visitors entering the school play ground and will ascertain their intentions. They will be supervised in the discharge of their business. Visitor/guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The school (principal/teachers) has a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use by guests is appropriate. Visitors are required to sign in at the office.

5.0 Curriculum Implications

Introduction

In St. Patrick's Girls National School, through fulfilling the general aims of the Primary

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Curriculum we will

- *Enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential*
- *Enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society*
- *Prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.*

In endeavouring to realise these aims we will create a positive school climate which is open, inclusive, respectful, fair, democratic and tolerant and which seeks to support the holistic development of all children and all adults working with our children. The strategies we will use to create this environment are detailed in our SPHE Plan and will involve:

- Creating a health-promoting physical environment
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Fostering respect for diversity
- Building effective communication within the school
- Developing appropriate home-school communication
- Catering for individual needs
- Developing democratic process
- Fostering inclusive and respectful language.

We follow the Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes.

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 and Protection.

The Stay Safe programme is in use in the school. The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every second year in accordance with the SPHE two-year cycle plan. The key messages of the programme will be revised in the intervening year.

The Learning Support/Resource/EFL teacher will liaise with the class teacher in the teaching of Stay Safe for children with Special Needs/Newcomer Children where necessary. The Special Needs pack for Stay Safe will be used as appropriate.

1st & 2nd classes

Again teachers agreed that implementing our SPHE programme as laid out under the 10 strand units named above would enable the children to develop skills, knowledge and 10

attitudes pertaining to self-esteem, esteem for others and the environment and skills pertaining to self-care and disclosure. Healthy eating, information on substance use and anti-bullying awareness will be introduced.

The SPHE programme will be supported by using the Walk Tall resources, our Alive-O programme, North Western Health Board materials and the Stay Safe programme.

3rd and 4th classes

Our SPHE programme will again be implemented according to the 10 strand units. Knowledge, skills and attitudes developed in previous classes will be built on. Children will be enabled to develop intra-personal skills and inter-personal skills. As children mature they will be challenged to develop their decision-making skills. They will be encouraged to develop self-protection skills pertaining to smoking and alcohol. Peer pressure and the influence of the media will also be examined. The development of self-esteem, esteem for

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others, assertiveness, awareness of feelings, and skills around self-protection and disclosure will underpin our teaching.

Our SPHE programme will be supported by the use of Walk Tall resources, Prim-Ed antibullying materials, RSE materials and the Stay Safe programme.

5th and 6th classes

Our SPHE programme will be implemented according to the curricular objectives as laid out under the 10 strands in the SPHE Curriculum. Skills, knowledge and attitudes developed in earlier classes will be enhanced. Children will continue to develop self-awareness and positive attitudes to themselves, others, their environment and the wider world in which they live. Self protection and respect for others will be fostered, decision-making skills developed, peer influence and media bias examined. Knowledge in relation to legal and illegal drugs and the prevention of substance misuse will be further developed. Children will be enabled to develop good group-building skills, anti-bullying awareness and conflict resolution skills. Self-protection will be emphasised and protection of younger, less able people. Positive attitudes to sexuality will be developed and respect for self and others fostered (see RSE policy).

The SPHE programme will be supported by the use of the Walk Tall materials, our ALIVE O programme, RSE resources, Stay Safe resources and North Lee North-Western Health board resources.

- **Success Criteria**

We will evaluate the success of this policy using the following criteria:

- Delivery and participation by all staff in training
- Delivery of the SPHE curriculum
- Resources to support the delivery of SPHE
- Delivery and participation by children in the Stay Safe Programme
- Assessment of these procedures by participants following a child protection case
- Feedback from all staff

- **Roles and Responsibility**

- DLP, principal, all Staff and Board of Management.

- **Timeframe for Implementation**

These procedures will be implemented following ratification by the BOM.

- **Timeframe for Review**

At the first staff meeting of every year the DLP will remind all teachers of the guidelines and copies of Chapter 2 & 3 & Appendix 1 of The Children First Guidelines and Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES will be given to those who require them. A yearly review will be conducted based on the criteria above, following any and all incidents when the guidelines are used and an action plan will be devised on a yearly basis.

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- **Responsibility for Review**

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Board will ensure that adequate training and support is provided to all staff.