

Child Protection Policy

Ethos of School:

We, at Castlerock Catholic National School, seek to provide the highest possible standard of Primary Education for all our Pupils.

All staff in Castlerock NS do so within the context of a set of beliefs about the meaning and value of human life. This set of beliefs constitutes the School Ethos.

It consists of the following:

Principles:

- the Christian faith underpins all school life.
 - the catholic teaching / faith is promoted.
 - all pupils are equally valued and respected.
 - all staff, teaching and ancillary, are equally esteemed and respected
 - Christian moral values are promoted and nurtured.
 - Religious differences are appreciated and respected.
 - Staff and pupils are encouraged to develop a meaningful personal and spiritual relationship with God.
 - Parental co-operation and support is recognised as being vital to children's progress in school.
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- Religious Education is seen as a core activity, and strong links are maintained with our own church and where possible other local Christian churches. Local clergy are encouraged to visit the school.
 - Moral issues are approached from children's perspective.
 - Family bereavement is thoughtfully and sensitively dealt with.
 - Practical concern for special needs, elderly and deprived people, both at home and abroad, is encouraged and demonstrated in all possible ways.

This policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the followings areas:-

- a) Prevention – curriculum provision
- b) Procedures - procedues for dealing with concerns / disclosures.
- c) Practice - best practice in child protection

An individual copy of this policy document and the appended section from the Department of Education and Science 'Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures' will be made available to all staff.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with 'Children First' and the DES child protection guidelines and procedures.

AIMS

This policy aims to

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment
- Provide a personal safety skills education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in the school
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community
- Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children and staff
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of and familiar with the 'Children First' and the DES guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosures of child abuse.
- Provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all school staff

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 schools' SPHE curriculum under the strand unit Safety and Protection (Personal Safety.) On enrolment of their child, parents will be informed that the Stay Safe programme is in use in the school and the Stay Safe 'A Parent's Guide' is available to view on the school website and parents are asked to sign a letter appertaining to Child Procedures in Castlerock NS.

The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every second year in accordance with the SPHE two-year cycle plan.

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

Procedures:

All staff (teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff, secretarial, caretaking etc.) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in 'Children First' and the Department of Education and Science document, 'Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures' available in hard copy in school office.

We have nominated, at our Board of Management meeting a senior member of staff to have specific responsibility for child protection. This person is called the DLP and is Carmel Burke. We also have a Deputy DLP who will take on the duties of the DLP in any case where the DLP is unavailable, namely Dolores Marren. The contact names and details for the DLP, local Garda Station and the HSE are displayed on the school noticeboard in the corridor.

The DLP and the DDLP in our school has attended a one day information seminar in relation to Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures. Our staff also received a whole school input on child protection procedures and an overview of the Stay Safe programme including approaches and methodologies.

We monitor the progress of pupils that may be considered at risk in a manner consistent with our duties as teachers. Each staff member has a means of recording concerns. These records are maintained confidentially and contain;

- Pupil reference number
- Date
- Observation/disclosure
- Signature.

Practice :

A. Recruitment and selection of staff

All applications should be asked to supply in writing information which includes:

- Appropriate personal details
- A résumé of past and current work/volunteering experience, indicating relevant qualifications or skills acquired
- At least two written references – verification of references should be sought through making verbal contact with the referees
- Teaching Council registration

It is also the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure that all personnel are properly supervised and supported in the work that they are doing.

Vetting is sought for personnel in our school who visit on a regular basis. This is carried out through the Central Vetting Unit in Thurles. Vetting forms can be obtained in the Diocesan office. Where vetting is not feasible, we use a volunteer form from the CPMSA and ask personnel to read and sign. We also ask visiting personnel to read a copy of our Child Protection policy and Code of behaviour and to accept the terms therein.

B. General Conduct

It is imperative in all dealings with the children in our care that a balance is struck between the rights of the child and the need for intervention.

As a general rule any physical contact between school personnel and the child should be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult. While physical contact can be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child the following should be factors in assessing its appropriateness

- It is acceptable to the child concerned
- It is open and not secretive
- It is appropriate to the age and development stage of the child.

All media products CDs, DVDs, computer software etc – should be checked for its appropriateness with regard to age and suitability.

Where a doubt exists with regard to the suitability of materials, parents, principal and / or board of management should be consulted as necessary.

C. Toileting

We encourage independence in the event of a toileting accident. We always deal with such incidents in a discrete and sensitive manner having due regard to minimising upset to the child. All staff members are aware of procedures to be carried out.

D. Swimming

All children are encouraged to dress and undress independently for swimming lessons. Teachers supervise with the SNA while parents provide assistance with their own children in Junior classes when possible. SNA assists children with additional needs.

E Supervision

Collection from school: in the school's enrolment form, contact names are sought of individuals, who with parental permission may collect their child/children from school. We ask parents to inform us if their child is not being collected by the nominated person. Parents/Guardians sign a child out when collected during school hours.

Teachers and ancillary staff supervise yards at break time. There is an incident book for recording incidents on the yard.

Children do not travel alone with staff members.

All staff members have a first aid qualification.

F. One to one teaching

One to one Support Teaching is carried out in a room which has glass in the door.

G. Visitors / guest speakers.

Teachers are present with guest speakers to ensure content is relevant and appropriate

H. Photography/video recording

Through enrolment forms, we seek permission from parents for photographs/ video recording at plays or other school activities.

Ratification

The Policy was ratified by the BOM of Castlerock N.S at a meeting on

30/9/24.

Review

It will be reviewed every year or if the need arises and / or in line with any change in legislation.

Signed by the Chairperson of the Board of Management

