

MALLUSK INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Protection Policy

(Please also refer to the Pastoral Care Policy, the Anti-Bullying policy and the Code of Conduct)

Introduction

We, in Mallusk Integrated Primary School, have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment in which all our pupils can learn and develop to their full potential.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The members of staff of Mallusk Integrated Primary School have also adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards pupils.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in Mallusk Integrated Primary School – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding 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.

Preventative measures

- NSPCC make presentations & hold workshops every other year to all the classes
- P6/ 7 take part in the PSNI CASE programme
- Anti-Bullying week
- Assemblies- Child Protection team, bullying, dealing with worries and fears, talking to a friend/ adult to solve problems, healthy lifestyle assemblies
- Circle Time- talking about worries, concerns etc.
- Community of Enquiry- discussing issues of concern
- Parent information sessions from PSNI regarding e-safety will be organised by school
- Regular communication with parents in regard to CP issues- policy sent to parents, parents consulted in policy review
- C2k software used- Let's stop Bullying (NIABF)
- Personal safety and e- safety issues are embedded in our Thematic approach- see the following table

Theme	Preventative Curriculum Covered
In the Toy Box	Personal safety when playing outside
Splish Splash Splosh Blue Planet Coast	Safety around water
Look at Me, Look at You Mighty Me	Personal hygiene Privates are private On-line safety
Going Places	Road safety
Home Sweet Home	Safety around medicines and in the home
It's a bug's life Growing Together	Safety in the garden Sun safety
Food and Celebrations	Healthy eating
Mighty Me	Smoking, drug and alcohol awareness Healthy lifestyle choices On-line safety
Are you Wise?	Smoking awareness Anti-bullying On-line safety
Impact	Healthy lifestyle choices Anti-bullying Cyber-bullying

Cyber safety

We recognise that the Internet is a part of everyday life for education, business and social interaction. Children use the Internet widely outside school and need to learn how to evaluate Internet information and to take care of their own safety and security. C2k filters the Internet in Mallusk Integrated Primary School for the protection of the pupils.

The purpose of Internet use in school is to raise educational standards, to promote pupil achievement, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management functions.

Each child has a unique log on and password. Children will be taught what Internet use is acceptable and what is not and given clear objectives for Internet use. Children will be taught to be critically aware of the materials they read and shown how to validate information before accepting its accuracy. Children will use age-appropriate tools to research Internet content. The evaluation of online materials is a part of teaching and learning in every subject and will be viewed as a whole-school requirement across the curriculum. Teachers will closely monitor the websites being used by children and supervise any Internet research closely. Teachers should always evaluate any websites/search engines before using them with their students; this includes websites shown in class as well as websites accessed directly by the children.

Children will only e-mail each other using the internal C2k system. In learning to e-mail, children will be taught that they must not reveal personal details of themselves or others in email communication, or arrange to meet anyone without specific permission from an adult.

Teachers and support staff are advised to report any concerns about internet content to the ICT coordinator, who will report the issue to C2k, and to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Lessons on Cyber bullying are embedded in our Themes. Children will be taught how cyber bullying is different from other forms of bullying, how it can affect people and how to respond and combat misuse. Promoting a culture of confident users will support innovation and safety. Children are encouraged to report any instances of cyber-bullying to teachers.

Social media

C2k filters and controls access to social media and social networking sites. Children will be taught never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them and/or their location. Examples would include real name, address, mobile or landline phone numbers, school attended, instant messaging (IM) and email addresses, full names of friends or family, specific interests and clubs etc. Children and parents are advised that the minimum age for using Facebook etc. is 13 years old.

Children will be advised on security and privacy online and will be encouraged to set passwords, deny access to unknown individuals and to block unwanted communications. Children will be encouraged to approve and invite known friends only on social networking sites and to deny access to others by making profiles private.

Teachers will not take photographs of any children using their mobile phone or tablet. They are advised not to be a 'Friend' on social media with a pupil, past pupil or parent. Parents must give permission for their child's photograph to be used on the school Facebook page and website. Children's full names will not be used anywhere on the website, particularly in association with photographs.

Staff and Governors are reminded that their social media use should not negatively reflect on the school and are advised to keep their Facebook page 'Friends only' rather than public.

Children are not allowed to use mobile phones in school. P7 children are permitted to have phones, but they must be switched off during school. If a child breaches the school policy then the phone or device will be confiscated and will be held in a secure place in the school office. Mobile phones and devices will be released to parents / carers at the end of the day.

Where cyber bullying outside school is reported to the school, it will be investigated and acted on in accordance with the anti-bullying procedures set out in the school policy. The Police will be contacted if a criminal offence is suspected.

Definition of Child Abuse

Categories of Child Abuse (Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection - Page 6 Par.9):

Children may be abused by a parent, sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child such as a foster parent or staff member in a residential home), an acquaintance or a stranger, who may be an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care, or both. The abuse may take a number of forms, including:

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, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical Injury – physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual Abuse – the sexual exploitation of a child for an adult’s or another young person’s own sexual gratification; the involvement of children 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 roles.

Emotional Abuse – persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

Further definitions of each of these forms of Child Abuse and signs to look out for are found in Appendix 1.

Bullying is also viewed as a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse. Mallusk Integrated Primary School operates an Anti-Bullying Policy. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by a designated teacher for Child Protection, and action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day.

A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but may include the loss of any privileges. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a pupil’s bullying behaviour persists and defies attempts by the school to address it satisfactorily by behaviour management strategies or disciplinary methods within a reasonable time, the second stage will be to instigate the Child Protection Procedures described in this Policy.

The School's Role in Identifying Abuse:

(Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection – Page 10 Par.14)

The relationship children have with teachers is based on trust. Teachers are often the only person in authority with whom a child will feel confident to talk. It is also recognised that other staff including classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors have an important role in the overall wellbeing of children.

Teachers and non-teaching staff, including lunchtime supervisors and auxiliary staff, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms of abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement or other disruption in family circumstances. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse. For example, the following may be noticeable:

- Bruises, particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the mark of a hand, lacerations, bite marks and burns, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education, swimming and other sports activities, or when very young children or children with special educational needs are helped with toileting.
- Possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition.
- Possible indicators of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence or attention-seeking.
- Sexual abuse may present physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity, withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Any combination of the above may be accompanied by or solely manifested in marked deterioration in school performance and/or increased absenteeism.

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive. Also, it must always be remembered that alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described above.

Signs and symptoms are indicators and merely highlight the need for further checking and assessment.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected (or disclosed) Child Abuse:

- **The designated teacher for Child Protection is Mrs Kinsella.** In her absence, Mrs McLaughlin will assume responsibility for Child Protection matters.
- If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act promptly.**
- **She should not investigate** – this is a matter for Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.

Written record to include:

- the nature of the information
 - who gave it
 - the time, date and circumstances
 - where the concern relates to signs or symptoms of possible abuse, a description of these.
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- The Principal will, as a matter of urgency, plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.
 - The designated teacher will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter should be referred to Social Services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
 - The designated teacher may seek clarification or advice with the EANI Designated Officer (Tel: 2566 2563/2565 3333) before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice (tel 944 822 23). Advice will be sought as to whether PSNI (9065 0222/Ballymena CARE Unit 2565 3355) are to be informed. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**
 - Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:
 1. The Social Services or the Police
 2. EANI.'s Designated Officer.

This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION'.

- The person who made the complaint, or gave the information, will be advised as soon as possible by the Principal as to whether the complaint has been referred to an investigating agency.

- A written record will be kept and will include:
 - details of any advice sought, from whom and when
 - the decision reached as to whether the case should be referred to Social Services; and, if so:
 - how, when and by whom this was done
 - otherwise, reasons for not referring to Social Services
 - how, when and by whom the person who made the complaint, or gave the information, is advised about whether or not the complaint has been referred.

Procedures to follow if the complaint is about a member of staff or a school volunteer or the Principal:

- If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff or a school volunteer, the Principal must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply. Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duties as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

- If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Senior Teacher must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

Confidentiality:

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse. 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.

Discreet Preliminary Clarification:

Schools are not an investigating agency, although discreet preliminary clarification may be appropriate. It is not the role of staff to enquire too deeply. Please refer to Appendix 3 for advice about talking to children where there are concerns of possible abuse.

Additional Points to Note:

- If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, she should speak to the designated teacher.
- Records will be kept at all stages and should include dates, events and action taken. All written records should also be dated and signed.
- The designated teacher may seek advice from the School Nurse, Educational Welfare Officer, Educational Psychologist, or other relevant agencies.
- The Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures issued by the Northern Area Child Protection Committee covers a wider range of procedures than this policy and where appropriate should be referred to.
- In the event of an allegation being substantiated, the school will co-operate with any recognised investigating authority.
- The school will continue its policy to regularly remind children regarding their own personal safety and foster trust between staff and pupils. Personal safety and potentially dangerous situations will be included in Health & Science, The World Around Us, RE and appropriately in other areas of the Curriculum. The school endeavours to provide a safe, secure, caring environment for all children.

Voluntary Helpers

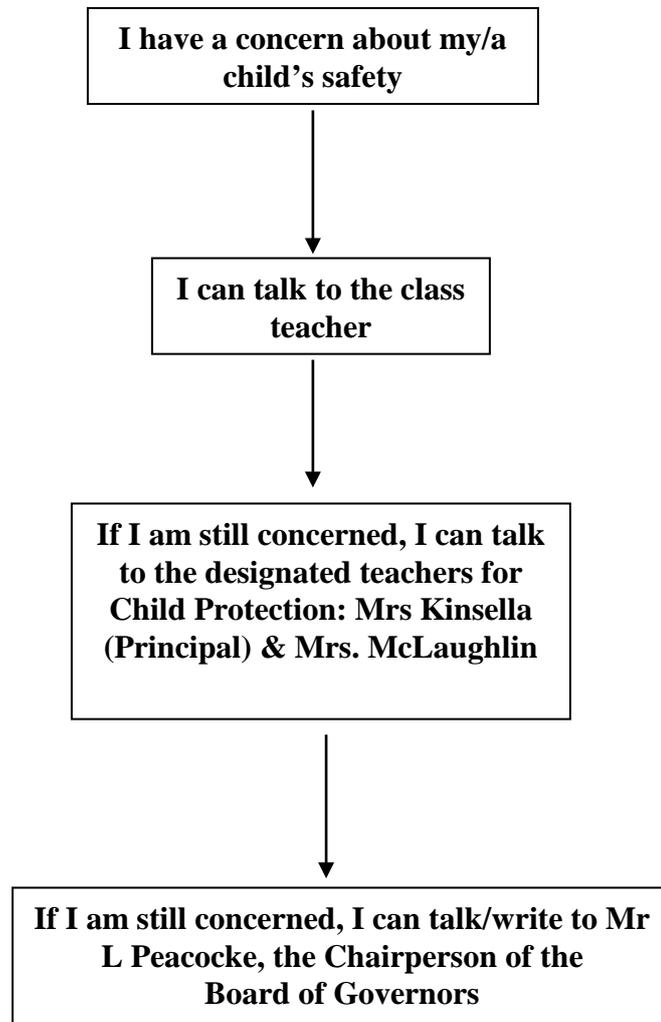
Names and addresses of voluntary helpers will be forwarded to the Education Authority for PSNI checking purposes.

References:

Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection

Copies of this Policy are available to all teaching and non-teaching staff and members of the Board of Governors.

How a Parent can make a Complaint about a Child's Safety



At any time, I can talk to a social worker [90508100] or the Police [90650222] or Ballymena CARE Unit [2565 3355]

Appendix 1

Reference:

Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures
(Northern Area Child Protection Committee, Northern Health and Social Services
Board, June 1997)

Signs and Symptoms

Physical Injury

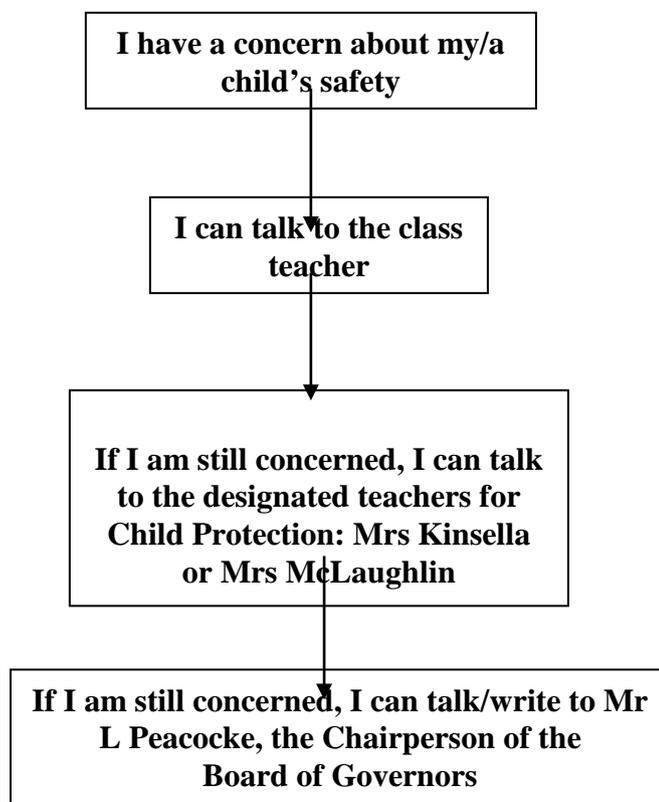
Neglect

Emotional Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Appendix 2

How a Parent can make a Complaint about a Child's Safety



At any time, I can talk to a social worker [90508100] or the Police [90650222] or Ballymena CARE Unit [2565 3355]

Appendix 3

Talking to children where there are concerns about possible abuse:

(Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection – Page 14 Par.21 & 22)

Where teachers see signs which cause them concern, they should seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. Where a classroom assistant or another member of the school's ancillary or auxiliary staff sees such signs, she should immediately bring them to the attention of either the class teacher or the designated teacher, and it may be appropriate for the necessary clarification to be carried out by the teacher. Such clarification may reassure teachers that abuse has not occurred; but signs and symptoms which cause concern, while

perhaps not a result of abuse, may nevertheless indicate that the child or his/her family is in need of Social Services' intervention.

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to, questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child makes an allegation of abuse, or volunteers information which amounts to that. In some circumstances, talking to a child will quickly crystallise initial concerns into a suspicion that abuse has occurred, and point to the need for an immediate referral. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child can have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings, and the extent of questioning should, therefore, be kept to a minimum:

- They should not ask the child leading questions, as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.
- They should not, therefore, ask questions which encourage the child to change his/her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own presumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?"
- The chief task at this stage is to *listen* to the child, and not to interrupt or try to interrupt if he/she is freely recalling significant events, and as soon as possible afterwards to make a note of the discussion to pass on to the designated teacher. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said. Signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, but *under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed*.
- Any comment by the child, or subsequently by a parent or carer or other adult, about how an injury occurred should be written down as soon as possible afterwards, preferably quoting words actually used.
- Staff should not give the child undertakings of confidentiality, although they can and should, of course, reassure that information will be disclosed only to those professionals who need to know.
- They should also be aware that their note of this discussion might need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings.

Reviewed: January 2017