

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection is the School Principal Mr. P. Kinsella and in his absence Ms Yvonne Bane, Guidance Counsellor. Should both Mr. P. Kinsella and Ms. Yvonne Bane be absent the matter should then be referred to the Deputy Principals.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

1. Any member of staff with an issue or concern relating to Child Protection should immediately discuss it with the Designated Liaison Person. Allegations of child abuse must always be given the highest priority and referred immediately to the Designated Liaison Person.
2. The Designated Liaison Person will then decide on an appropriate course of action (based on the DES Children First Guidelines).

DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

It should be made clear to students that:

CONFIDENTIALITY CANNOT BE GUARANTEED IN RESPECT OF CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES.

If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about possible abuse there are a number of things that should be done to support child:

- Stay calm and be available to Listen
- Be sensitive when responding to the disclosure
- Listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying
- Care should be taken not to damage the trust shown
- Don't put words into the child's mouth but note the main points carefully in their words
- No judgemental statement should be made about the person against who the allegation is made or the child making the allegation
- Leading questions should be avoided and open, non-specific questions should be used
- Keep a full record – date, time, what the child did, said, etc

- Reassure the child and let them know they were right to inform us and everything possible will be done to protect him/her
- Explain the need for action which will involve other adults being involved
- Immediately inform the Designated Liaison Person, or when absent the nominated member of staff. The Designated Liaison Person will then decide on an appropriate course of action (based on the DES Children First Guidelines).

RECORD KEEPING

- ❖ It is essential that accurate records be kept where there are concerns about the welfare of a child.
- ❖ Signs of physical injury should be described in detail and if appropriate sketched.
- ❖ Staff should note carefully what they observed and when they observed it.
- ❖ Any comments by the child should be recorded, preferably quoting words actually used. eg: how an injury occurred.
- ❖ These records should then be signed, dated and kept in a secure location.

Reports may be needed for Child Protection Case conferences.
Consequently records and reports should be:

- Factual (no opinions)
- Non-judgemental (no assumptions)
- Clear
- Accurate
- Relevant
- Signed and dated