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 Benedict’s Primary School has agreed the following child protection policy:

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.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is: Deirdre Coyle ( Principal)

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is: Fiona O’ Connor ( Deputy Principal)

In its policies, practices and activities, St Benedict’s Primary School 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.

School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection are the Code of Behaviour/Anti-bullying Policy, Pupil Attendance Strategy, Supervision of Pupils & Child Protection Practices Appendix 3.

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.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents’ Association and is readily accessible

to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron on request.

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

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Deirdre Coyle

(Chairperson of Board of Management) Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_January 2016 Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_January 2016

Date of next review: **January 2017**

**Appendix 1: Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy**

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of its Child Protection Policy and the following checklist shall be used for this purpose.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. The BoM may wish to include other items in the checklist that are of particular relevance to St Benedict’s Primary School and reserves the right to do so if/when the need occurs.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess other school policies, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the school’s Child Protection policy | YES | NO |
|  | Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’? | YES | NO |
|  | As part of the school’s child protection policy, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’? | YES | NO |
|  | Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed? | YES | NO |
|  | Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand? | YES | NO |
|  | Has the DLP attended available child protection training? | YES | NO |
|  | Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training? | YES | NO |
|  | Have any members of the Board attended child protection training? | YES | NO |
|  | Has the school’s child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance? | YES | NO |
|  | Has the Board ensured that the Department’s ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary  and Post Primary Schools’ are available to all school personnel? | YES | NO |
|  | Does the Board have arrangements in place to communicate the school’s child protection policy to new school personnel? | YES | NO |
|  | Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’? | YES | NO |
|  | Since the Board’s last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection  reports made to the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP? | YES | NO |
|  | Since the Board’s last annual review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made? | YES | NO |
|  | Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/ An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed? | YES | NO |
|  | Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes? | YES | NO |
|  | Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely? | YES | NO |
|  | Has the Board ensured that the Parents’ Association has been provided with the school’s child protection policy? | YES | NO |

**Appendix 2: CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES.**

* **Designated Liaison Person: Deirdre Coyle**
* **Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Fiona O Connor**

**If a child discloses information to you:-**

* **Listen**
* **Do not ask leading questions**
* **Offer reassurance but do not promise not to tell**
* **Explain that other adults may need to be told - (D.L.P)**
* **Do not stop the child speaking**
* **Do not over react or comment**
* **Inform D.L.P. If you have a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern that a child is at risk or has suffered abuse the D.L.P. should contact the Health Board for advice.**
* **At the earliest opportunity, record accurately what the child has said – using the child’s own words. Record date/time and context of the disclosure. Use child’s registration number – not child’s name.**
* **Facts only**
* **Sketch signs of physical injury if appropriate**
* **Retain records for a period of 21 years in keeping with the school’s Record Keeping Policy.**

**The following should also be reported to the D.L.P :**

* **An account from a person who saw a child being abused**
* **Injury consistent with abuse**
* **Dysfunctional behaviour**
* **Implausible explanations for injury or behaviour**
* **Consistent evidence over a period of time that a child is being emotionally or physically neglected.**

**Health Board Response:**

* **School is asked to monitor the situation**
* **Formal report is requested , sent by D.L.P and on receipt case is allocated to Social Worker**
* **Preliminary enquiry – screening process**
* **Initial assessment**

**Possible outcomes:**

* **Case closed**
* **Family support**
* **Child Protection Plan (usually following a case conference)**

**APPENDIX 3 Child Protection Practices**

The staff and BoM of this school have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to Child Protection. Following discussion and consultation, the staff and BoM have agreed that the following practices be adopted:

* Physical contact between school personnel and the child should always be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult

While physical contact may be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child, the following should be factors in determining its appropriateness:

* It is acceptable to the child
* It is open and not secretive
* The age and developmental stage of the child

School personnel should avoid doing anything of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

School personnel should never engage in or allow:

* The use of inappropriate language or behaviours
* Physical punishment of any kind
* Sexually provocative games or suggestive comments about or to a child
* The use of sexually explicit or pornagraphic material

All media products (CDs, DVDs etc.) should be checked for their appropriateness with regard to age and suitability.

**Visitors/Guest Speakers**

Appropriately appointed and screened visiting teachers of varying disciplines, engaged by the BoM of St Benedict’s Primary School to perform specific duties.

**Visitors/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 is appropriate.

**Children with specific toileting/intimate 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, special needs assistant, Principal and if 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
* Two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care/toileting needs or the bathroom door will be ajar and one member of staff will assist the child while the other member remains outside the door but is aware of the situation

**Toileting accidents**

Clean underwear and suitable clothing will be kept in the school so that if a pupil 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 themselves and the parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the child will be assisted by members of 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 by class teacher and parents will be notified.

**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. Accidents will be noted in our Incident book and addressed as part of our Health and Safety policy.

**On-to-one teaching**

* It is the policy in this school that one-to-one teaching can sometimes be in the best interest of the child
* Every effort will be made to ensure that this teaching takes place in an open environment
* Parents of children who are to be involved in one-to-one teaching will be informed and their agreement sought
* Work being carried out by Special Needs Assistants will be carried out under the direction of the class teacher in an open environment.

**Changing for games/PE/Swimming**

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for Games/PE/Swimming. Where assistance is needed, this will be done in the communal area and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child unsupervised in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required, the parents/guardians of the child will be asked to assist the child. St Benedict’s Primary School will endeavour to have a female member of staff/ volunteer in the female changing area and staff from the pool complex present in changing area at intervals.

The BoM of St Benedict’s Primary School has requested that all swimming volunteers apply to be vetted. In the interim, a Volunteer Form approved by the CPSMA will be in use. At all times there must be adequate supervision of pupils. While every effort will be 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 the Principal and parents.

Teachers bringing children to games on buses should ensure that they are not left alone at the school with a child awaiting collection. **Where two teachers are unavailable a teacher should ask a parent to wait with them until the last child is collected.**

**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. Teachers will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse.

**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.

**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 or request a colleague to attend. Further details on communications are found in the school’s Communication Policy.

**Induction of Staff**

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Child Protection Procedures (DES, 2011) and Children First Guidelines (2011), but particularly the recently published Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). All new teachers are expected to teach the appropriate SPHE objectives for their class. A member of staff, once trained, will be responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives.

**Induction of Pupils**

All parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). All parents will be informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development e.g. RSE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe and SPHE. All new parents will be given a copy of the school’s enrolment policy, and made aware of procedures parents and children should use when contacting the school if there are absences or concerns of an educational/personal/family matter. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child’s progress. All parents will be given a copy of the school’s Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

**Internet Safety**

It is the intention of the Principal and Staff at St Benedict’s Primary School to ensure that child protection concerns will be addressed in the school’s Acceptable Use Policy as part of its Information and Communication Technology policy. The Stay Safe lessons in each classroom may be supplemented with appropriate resources. There may also be annual meetings during which parents will be invited to attend a session with an invited speaker to stay abreast of the ever-changing situation regarding internet access.

**Record Keeping**

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 office. Further details on record keeping will be found in the school’s Assessment & Record Keeping Policy.

**Supervision**

The school’s supervision policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks. A rota will be displayed to cover 11 o’clock and lunchtime breaks. See Supervision Policy for agreed rules around break-times and procedures around teacher absences.

**Visibility**

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school playground. 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 playground or to engage with adults who are outside of the school playground.

**Appendix 4**

**Letter provided to parent as part of information pack at start of each new school year**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In recent years, as a society, we have become very aware of the problem of child abuse through neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Each one of us has a duty to protect children and Children First, the National Guidelines, for the Protection and Welfare of Children noted that teachers, who are the main care givers to children outside the family, are particularly well placed to observe and monitor children for signs of abuse.

In response to this, the Department of Education and Skills published procedures for all schools in relation to child protection and welfare. These guidelines promote the safety and welfare of all children and are to be welcomed.

The Board of Management of St Benedict’s Primary School has adopted these guidelines as school policy. Consequently, if school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child abuse, they are obliged to refer this matter to the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

Children First, the National Guidelines for the Protection of Children may be assessed on the website of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.([www.dcya.ie](http://www.dcya.ie)) and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures can be read on the Department’s website ([www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)). Parents/Guardians are also welcome to look through the guidelines here at the school.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Chairperson

**Child Protection Contacts**

**Designated Liaison Person**

**Deirdre Coyle**

**Deputy DLP**

**Fiona O’ Connor**

**Garda Station**

**Telephone:**

**The Children and Family Social Services of the HSE**

**Roselawn Health Centre,**

**TELEPHONE:01**