

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Principles:

The Children N.I Order 1995:

Taking into consideration the 5 main principles of the order, the first being 'The Welfare of the Child is Paramount.'

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) states:

'Children have the right to be as healthy as possible, live and play in a safe, healthy unpolluted environment and benefit from preventive health care and education.'

Statement of Intent

Holy Trinity After School Club operates in accordance with the Children's (NI) Order 1995 ensuring the Welfare of the Child is paramount. Children are safeguarded through systems and practices that are consistent with the Regional Child Protection Policies and Procedures. These are available from <https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/>. Staff will work in partnership with parents, children and statutory agencies to ensure all children are protected from harm. The Staff and Management at Holy Trinity After School Club accept and recognise their responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm and how to safeguard and protect them through relevant training. Staff are aware of their responsibility with regard to reporting suspected or actual abuse or neglect.

Procedure

Staff will be employed in relation to the Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996.

All staff will be subject to:

- Pre-employment interviews
- Vetting carried out via Access NI
- A Social Services Trust Check
- 2 References being provided
- A declaration of health
- A probationary period which will be reviewed within 3 months

Our response to suspicions of abuse

- Our first priority will always be the child.
- By ongoing observation, any significant behaviour that might be of concern, will be recorded.
- Records will be kept until the child's 21st birthday in case of legal action.
- Appropriate action will be taken to support children who may disclose they are being abused.
- If a child discloses that they are being abused, they will not be questioned in a leading way and all facts will be recorded.
- Children whose condition or behaviour gives cause for concern will be listened to and reassured that they are valued and respected.
- All concerns will be kept confidential, shared only with the relevant authorities and the Designated Officer in Charge of Child Protection or a Deputy Designated Officer in Charge of Child Protection.

- Parents are asked to keep us informed of any significant accidents and injuries which occurred outside the After School setting. Staff also document if a child arrives to the setting with any injuries.
- If a member of staff is accused of any form of abuse the gross misconduct procedure, as per their contract of employment, will take effect immediately.
- Holy Trinity After School do not conduct investigations. Concerns and allegations will be passed on to the Gateway Team who will decide what further action, if any, needs to be taken.

If a member of staff working within Holy Trinity After School Club:

- Notices any unusual marks or bruises on a child,
- Is aware of inappropriate sexual language or behaviour from a child,
- Observes signs of serious neglect of a child,
- Is told by a child that they are being harmed or abused,

The staff will respond appropriately by:

- Use appropriate strategies e.g. listening to the child, not asking leading questions, to support children who make a disclosure of abuse.
- By observing children on a regular basis and recording any significant changes in behaviour that may cause concern.
- Understanding that information may be required to be transferred to relevant organisations and will be done confidentially.

All child records and any child protection records will be kept in a locked cabinet with only access by designated persons. All staff have a legal duty to report any concerns to Holy Trinity After School Clubs Designated Officer in Charge of Child Protection and if this is not possible then a Deputy Designated Officer of Child Protection should be informed, who will then pass the relevant information on to the Gateway Team.

Further Information can be found about the Gateway Team on our notice board.

The Designated Child Protection Officer should usually let parents know this is happening, however if there is a concern that telling the parents will put the child at greater risk, then parents will not be notified until the matter is investigated by the Gateway Team.

If you have any queries about our Child Protection Policy or want more information or advice, please speak to the:

- Designated Child Protection Officer – Sarina Markey
- Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer 1 – Alanna O’Hara
- Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer 2 – Eunan Mc Cusker

Telephone Number: 07834543170

During registration parents are made aware of Holy Trinity After Schools procedures for safeguarding and child protection. If staff have a reasonable concern that a child may be at risk or is suffering abuse or neglect, information may be passed to the Gateway Team without parental consent.

As outlined in child record forms, staff will ensure that children are collected from Holy Trinity After School only by parents and those named on the forms. Authorised persons must be aged 18 or over.

Supporting Staff

Being involved in cases of abuse or alleged abuse can be upsetting and stressful for staff and they will be supported appropriately.

Sharing Information

We will only share information or concerns with any other persons or agencies on a need to know basis.

Recognition of child abuse

Staff may observe changes in a child's behaviour or marks on a child's body. There are a number of well-established signs and symptoms of abuse, which are detailed in the Regional child protection policy and procedures. These do not always suggest conclusively that abuse is occurring, but are indicators of concern that may prompt a member of staff.

Physical Abuse

- Hitting
- Biting
- Pinching
- Shaking
- Throwing
- Poising
- Burning
- Scratching
- Drowning
- Suffocating

Emotional Abuse

- Bullying
- Deliberately telling a child they are worthless, unloved or inadequate.
- It may include not giving a child opportunity to express themselves, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate

Sexual Abuse

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration
- Kissing, rubbing or touching outside of clothing
- Encouraging child to act in sexually inappropriate way
- Grooming child in preparation of grooming
- Involving children in production of sexual images
- Sexually inappropriate language/ behaviour
- Injuries to genital area
- Rectal bleeding
- Fingertip bruising to inner thighs
- Sexualised language/behaviour

Neglect

- Failure to attend medical needs
- Malnutrition
- Poor personal hygiene/ unkempt appearance
- Seclusion
- Inadequate clothing

Exploitation

- Child labour
- Slavery
- Servitude
- Begging
- Child trafficking
- Benefit or other financial fraud

These lists are not exhaustive, but are given as signs and symptoms. Children attending Holy Trinity After School come from a variety of homes and backgrounds, with differing social backgrounds.

If a member of staff has concerns or an allegation is made, a clear written factual record of all events and actions must be taken. This must be dated and signed after each entry to the record. All records must be kept confidential and secure.

The following is a checklist of details to record and questions to ask yourself in making a report:

- Name of child
- Age of child
- Any special factors
- Name of parents
- Home address and phone number
- Is the person making the report passing on their own concerns or passing on those of somebody else?
- What has prompted the concerns? Include dates, times etc of any specific incidents.
- Any physical signs? behavioural signs? Indirect signs?
- What was said by the child?
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
- Has anyone been consulted? If so, record details

It is acknowledged that reporting abuse can be a distressing experience for staff and volunteers, consequently support will be offered throughout the process.

Procedure if a parent or carer has concerns:

I have a concern about my/another child's safety.

If I am concerned, I can talk to the Manager
Sarina Markey (Child Protection Officer)
07834543170

If Sarina is unavailable I can contact
Deputy Manager Alanna O'Hara
(Deputy Child Protection Officer) or

If Alanna is unavailable I can talk to
Room Leader Eunan Mc Cusker
(2nd Deputy Child Protection Officer)
07834543170

At any time, I can talk to the
Gateway Team 028 71314090,
Early Years Team 02866327734,
Regional Social Services 02895049999 after 5pm,
weekends and bank holidays.