



APPENDIX A

Child Protection – Good Practice Guidelines

Child Protection Practices

The staff and Board of Management of St. Vincent de Paul Girls' School have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to Child Protection. Following discussion and consultation, the staff and Board have agreed that the following practices be adopted:

- Physical contact between school personnel and children 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 pornographic material

All media products (CDs, DVDs, YouTube 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 Board of St Vincent de Paul Girls' School to perform specific duties, will not be left to work alone with a class or group. The only exception to this is for the ACCORD facilitators who deliver Relationships and Sexuality talks for 5th and 6th class girls. However, the class teacher



must be available and remain outside the classroom door at all times during the delivery of such talks.

Visitors/Guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The Principal 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, the school's Intimate Care Policy will be adhered to.

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. Parents will be contacted immediately.

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 and Principal 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. Accident Report forms should be filled out in the event of an accident. These must be signed by the supervising teacher and given to the principal to countersign. Minor accidents do not need to be reported to parents during the school day. All accidents involving bumps to the head should be followed up with parents as soon as possible. The principal or deputy principal should be consulted if there is any doubt regarding the seriousness of an injury or whether parents should be informed or not.

One-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 environment where both teacher and child can be seen
- 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 Swimming

4th class pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for Swimming. If assistance is needed, this will be done in a 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. Male members of staff should not be present in any changing area. Male volunteers for Swimming should only be of assistance in walking to and from the pool.

Although not mandatory when there is no unsupervised access, the Board has asked that parents who volunteer to help with swimming activities be Garda vetted.

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. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse. Unexplained/unanticipated absences of three days or longer should be reported to the Principal who will follow up with a phone call. Reasons for all absences are required to be logged by parents on the Aladdin Connect system.

Behaviour

Children are encouraged to play co-operatively at all times 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.

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.

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, which outlines the 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 directed to the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies on our website.

Internet Safety

It is the intention of the principal and staff at St Vincent de Paul Girls' School to ensure that child protection concerns will be addressed in the school's Acceptable Use Policy as part of its



ICT policy. The Stay Safe lessons in each classroom may be supplemented with appropriate resources. There will also be meetings every two years 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

Teachers will keep records on each child. These records are kept in each teacher's folder. Attendance on the Aladdin system 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 locked filing cabinet in Special Education Dept.

Supervision

Staff will ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks. A rota will be displayed to cover mid-morning and lunchtime breaks.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school playground. They are not to leave the school playground or to engage with adults who are outside of the school playground.

Signed:

Chairperson

Principal

Date:

28/09/2020