



Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The Child Care Act (1991), Children's Act 2001 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992), enshrine in law the paramount principle of the welfare of children. They were designed to promote the welfare and protection of children (0 – 18 years). The Acts cover the rights and responsibilities of parents, the protection of children in emergencies, children in care, the supervision of pre-schools and the duty of the Health Service Executive (HSE) to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection.

In 2004, "Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools", updated in 2011, was published by the Department of Health and Science and offers support and guidance to people who come into regular contact with children, and who are, therefore, in a position of responsibility in recognising and responding to possible child abuse.

Legislative Basis for policy

- Child Care Act 1991
- Children's Act 2001
- Education Act 1998
- Education and Welfare Act 2000
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 1997/2003

Copies of these acts can be found at <http://www.education.ie>.

This Child Protection Policy is drawn up in conjunction with these acts and guidelines. At The Dublin Academy of Education, the safety and protection of the child is of paramount importance in all situations.

Child Protection Reporting Procedure

- The Designated Person to deal with Child Protection concerns in this organisation is Gráinne Swan.
- Should this person be absent, for whatever reason the deputy Designated Person is Sharon Kelly.
- Should a child make a disclosure to a staff member or volunteer we have clear guidelines as to how that staff member or volunteer would respond.

- Any member of staff or volunteer who has a Child Protection concern will discuss their concerns with the Designated Person
- The Designated Person is responsible for the recording of any such concerns
- The Designated Person may consult with the HSE regarding a possible referral as well as making a referral.
- In the case of emergency or an out-of-hours situation the Garda should be contacted and those numbers are easily available to all staff and volunteers.
- It is our policy to inform parents/carers about any Child Protection concerns, unless doing so would put the child at further risk
- The appropriate verbal/written communication regarding Child Protection concerns will be made to the HSE without delay.

Recognising Child Abuse

The Dublin Academy of Education will endeavour to protect pupils from abuse or risk of abuse.

Abuse can fall under the following four headings:

- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical Abuse

All members of staff are expected to be vigilant and report concerns immediately to the DLP or the DDLP . Students are encouraged to report to staff any type of bullying or abuse they may be aware of. Students are also aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if it compromises the safety of a student. The safety and protection of students is a priority in all cases.

The following would merit further investigation:

- A student alleges abuse to the DLP/DDLP
- Another person reports allegations of a student being abused
- Obvious evidence of physical injuries inconsistent with an accident
- A student showing signs of being emotionally distressed

Keeping Records

When child abuse is suspected, the DLP shall keep proper dated and signed records. All records are highly confidential and it is the responsibility of the DLP to ensure that these are kept securely.

Details of allegations and reports of alleged incidents of abuse must be recorded. The records may include:

- The written report from the staff member who received the information or who has concerns;
- The date and time of disclosure, allegation or actual abuse incident;
- An indication of the parties involved (including third parties) including names and addresses;
- Any suspicions consequent on the information and the factual grounds for such suspicions;
- The response of the parents/guardians to the information (if any);
- The decision not to inform the parents/guardian together with the reason for same;
- Details (dates, times, people, place) of any subsequent meetings and communications of interested parties;
- Decisions re referral (or not) to the HSE, or An Garda Síochána including how, why, when and by whom the decision was taken;
- Details of any advice received from HSE, including when and from whom;
- Details of any updates given to the staff member who made the initial report in writing;
- Details of what action The Dublin Academy of Education has taken;

Dealing with Allegations against staff

Our Duty of Care' advises that two procedures need to be followed:

1. Reporting procedure in respect of the child
2. The procedure for dealing with the employee

Responsibilities

Where an allegation is made against a teacher, other member of staff, or unpaid volunteer, it will be the responsibility of the DLP or DDLP to ensure that any complaint is thoroughly investigated, (protecting the rights of both the child and the employee).

In general the same person shall not have responsibility for dealing with the reporting issue and the employment issue. The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for reporting the matter to the appropriate HSE area while the Board of Management is responsible for addressing the employment issues. However, where the allegation/suspicion related to the DLP, the Board of Management shall assume the responsibility for seeking advice from and/or for reporting the matter to the HSE, as appropriate.

1. Reporting procedure in respect of the child
 - The designated liaison person will follow the standard procedures for dealing with concerns/disclosures of abuse and reporting to the HSE.
 - We recognise that the welfare of the child remains the paramount consideration and that where there are reasonable grounds for concern the reporting procedure will be followed without delay.

- The DLP will also inform a designated member of the Board of Management without delay.
1. The procedure for dealing with the employee
 - The designated member of the Board of Management will inform the employee/volunteer that an allegation has been made against him/her and the nature of the allegation.
 - The employee will be given an opportunity to respond. The designated member of the Board of the Management will note the response and pass on the information when making the standard report to the HSE. The worker will be informed of how the information they provide will or may be used.
 - Further action will be guided by the employment contract and the rules of natural justice – the first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. Protective measures, proportionate to the level of risk, must be undertaken.
 - Follow up action on the allegation/concern will be taken in consultation with the investigating agencies: the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána. After these consultations, when pursuing the question of the future position of the employee, the designated member of the Board of the Management will advise the employee of the agreed procedures to be followed
 - We will take care to maintain close liaison with the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána during the course of the investigation.
 - We will keep parents informed or actions planned and taken, having regard to the rights of others concerned.

Feedback from the Health Service Executive

The HSE Children and Family Services will provide feedback to The Dublin Academy of Education or person in charge on the progress of a child abuse investigation involving an employee.

The HSE will seek to promptly assess complaints and to complete its assessment as quickly as possible, bearing in mind the serious implications for innocent employees.

The Dublin Academy of Education or person in charge will be notified of the outcome of the assessment/investigation. This will assist the Board of Management in reaching a decision about the action to be taken in the longer term concerning the employee.

Anti- Bullying Policy

Background

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 The Board of Management of The Dublin Academy of Education has adopted the following anti bullying policy. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the 'Anti

Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools,' which were published in September 2013.

Introduction

Everyone has a right to a safe, inclusive learning and working environment. We are all responsible for ensuring each person is valued, listened to and protected. The Dublin Academy of Education disapproves of offensive or aggressive behaviour by any of its members.

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour.

All management, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and their parents should have an understanding of what bullying is. All management, teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.

All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises. Bullying will not be tolerated. Students and parents should be assured they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Students need to be aware of bullying and its consequences. Students need to be aware of the importance of reporting and the procedures involved. Students and staff have a shared responsibility to make the school and class a safe and secure place, which is inclusive of all.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour - verbal, psychological or physical - conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. Bullying behaviour is intentional and deliberate.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- Cyber-bullying
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with The Dublin Academy of Education Code of Behaviour. However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with The Dublin Academy of Education Code of Behaviour

Indications of Bullying

- Unwillingness to attend The Dublin Academy of Education, missing
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches)
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers
- Unexplained bruising or cuts
- Unexplained changes in either mood or behaviour, it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – crying, not eating, vomiting, difficulty in sleeping
- Possessions missing or damaged
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her

Procedures for Noting and Reporting an Incident of Bullying Behaviour

All reports of bullying behaviour are noted, investigated and dealt with in a sensitive manner. In this way, it is hoped that pupils will gain confidence in disclosing bullying behaviour. Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents of alleged bullying to a member of staff. Issues or incidents that are not reported cannot be dealt with.

The procedures for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by The Dublin Academy of Education for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Incidents of bullying are reported to staff
- All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial will be investigated by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
- Non-teaching staff such as caretakers, cleaners etc. are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour they witness to the DLP.

- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with the DLP who will inform The Board of Management.

How Bullying is dealt with

- Confidentiality is essential. Those who report must feel confident that the information will not be repeated outside the agreed structure.
- It is vital that information is acted upon as quickly and discreetly as possible and is not ignored.
- The most effective approach is low key.
- The victim and alleged bully will be spoken to separately
- The victim will be interviewed to express support, to gather information, to assure him that action will be taken and to explain that action
- The care team will assist the victim in coping with the results of being bullied and in developing ways of dealing with any possible future incidents.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed to present the reported information, to gather further information and to confirm or deny the allegations.

If Bullying is confirmed

- Parents of the victim and the bully will be informed.
- The bully will be advised that the reported behaviour must cease.
- Positive changes in the bully's behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. The bully may need help in understanding his/her behaviour and learning new and more appropriate ways of behaving.
- The bully and his parents will be clearly informed that any further instance of bullying will result in suspension or dismissal.
- In cases where The Dublin Academy of Education rules have been fighting, deliberate injury, damage to victim's property etc.) normal disciplinary action will be taken.
- Staff members will monitor the on-going situation and discreetly check back with the victim/friends later.

- The DLP will monitor the investigation of an alleged incident of bullying.

Support

All students involved in bullying (bullies, victims and their peers) are given assistance/counselling through the care team within The Dublin Academy of Education.

Serious cases of bullying behaviour are referred immediately to the DLP or Deputy DLP who may, if necessary, refer them on to An Garda Síochána.