



SEPTEMBER 2024 INFORMATION LETTER

Welcome back everyone to the beginning of a new school year with some small changes to staffing!

Staffing 2024/2025

Mrs Cunningham will continue her role as Co-Principal of St. Patrick's P.S. on Mondays and Tuesdays. Mrs Grugan will continue as Principal & SENCO on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays. Please refer any management queries to the Principal on duty on their day.

We are sad to lose Mrs Heaney from our teaching staff after teaching 33 years in St Patricks PS. . Mrs Heaney taught a range of classes from P1 to P7 throughout her time at St Patricks PS .and made a difference to so many of our pupils' lives. We wish her many happy and healthy years of retirement..

We welcome Mrs Mc Dermott as a permanent member of the teaching staff. She will teach P2/3 Mon-Fri..

WE WELCOME OUR NEW P1'S:

Bláithín Green, Riley McCullagh, Cara McCullagh, Chuisle McCullagh, Ella McCullagh, Navaeh-Rose McCullagh, Hannah Morris, Niamh Morris, Cillian Mossey-McCullagh, Logan Smith & Odhrán Ward.

We are also delighted to welcome pupils:

Éireann, Emma & Connor Morris, Matthew Tait & Ryan Donnelly who are transferring from St Eugene's PS ,Tycur. We were extremely saddened to hear about the closure of their wonderful Primary School in Tycur..We are blessed to also welcome new pupils, Peter Mc Cullagh and Pascal Corry!

We wish them lots of happiness and success in their new school and we hope they feel very welcome and safe!

ACCESS CONTROL – GATE AND MAIN DOOR

The gate and door will open at 9.00am. Please do not drop off pupils before this time. The school day begins at 9.15am and all pupils should be on the premises at this time. The main door and gate will close at 9.15am. **IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT PUPILS ARRIVING AFTER THIS TIME ARE ESCORTED TO THE FRONT DOOR BY AN ADULT.**

ATTENDANCE

PLEASE NOTE THAT PUPILS' LATE ARRIVAL AND LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY IS RECORDED ON PUPIL ATTENDANCE RECORDS AND CAN IMPACT ON THEIR PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE. .

Please ensure as far as possible that your child arrives between 9 and 9.15am ...and that appointments are arranged for afterschool...

Please phone the school in the morning if your child is absent or going to be late.

Please arrange family holidays for during school closures only...as again this can impact on both Learning and Attendance percentage. .The school will not supply pupil work for holidays taken during school openings..

PICK-UPS / DROP-OFFS - Please arrive on time at the end of the school day to collect pupils - 2.00pm. (P1/2) & 3.05pm (P3-7.)

For the safety of our pupils, we would ask that cars are not parked close to the school gate. Please drop off or pick up at a safe distance away from the gate and drive slowly in the parish grounds...

IF THE BUS HAS NOT COME IN THE MORNING AND YOU HAVE HAD TO LEAVE YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL, PLEASE ARRANGE TO COLLECT IN THE AFTERNOON.. Unless you have been informed by Transport that the bus is back on..

COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF-OFFICE NUMBER...02881648420

Please ring the office to arrange an appointment or ring after 3.10pm to speak to the class teacher. Unfortunately, teachers are not available from 9am – 3pm but a message can be left in the school office during this time, and they will get back to you at the end of the day. Please do not use emails or the school texting system which is one way only...

NUT / EGG / COCONUT / OAT ALLERGIES

Please note that we have pupils in the school with nut, egg, coconut & oat allergies. We would appreciate if you could ensure that **NO** items containing these ingredients are sent into school for **BREAK OR LUNCH**. Please check labels. We would also appreciate if food items including **CAKES, SWEETS** etc. are **NOT** sent into the school for pupil birthdays or end of term parties. Each class teacher will organise the end of term treats. Your support is very much appreciated.

RECYCLING CLOTHES BIN -We have a contract with “**CASH FOR CLOBBER**” recycling service. We would appreciate if you would use this bin for all your unwanted clothing. The contents will be removed weekly, and the school will receive payment in full, keeping in line with our Eco-Friendly school ethos!

TERM ONE MONIES – (see back page)

COULD ALL MUSIC & COACH MONEY PLEASE BE FORWARDED BY MONDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS / UNIFORM GRANT

Parents can apply for free school meals / uniform grant, if they are in receipt of certain benefits. Further information on eligibility and how to apply can be found on the EA website:
<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

DINNERS – £2.60 EACH - MUST BE ORDERED AND PAID FOR IN ADVANCE. Please send order form and money in each **FRIDAY** for the following week. We will send order form home each Thursday. To reduce office administration, we ask that no orders or money are sent in on any days other than Fridays.

PLEASE NOTE THAT FREE SCHOOL MEALS HAVE TO BE APPLIED FOR ANNUALLY. ONLY THOSE NAMES ON OUR FREE SCHOOL MEALS LIST ARE ELIGIBLE FOR NON-PAYMENT OF DINNERS.

DATA COLLECTION (1 PER FAMILY - PLEASE COMPLETE ONLINE.)...if not already completed in August..

This can be accessed online in the “Announcement” section of the website. www.stpatricksgortin.com
The link will also be forwarded by text. It is a statutory procedure that this form must be completed and submitted before your child returns to school.

GENERAL CONSENT FORM (1 PER FAMILY – PLEASE COMPLETE ONLINE.)

In line with GDPR regulations, this form must be completed annually for all families. This can also be accessed online. The link will also be forwarded by text. Our data protection policy and privacy notice can be requested from the school office.

HOLIDAY LIST ENCLOSED - Please try and plan holidays and breaks around these dates.

CLASSROOM PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR PLANS

As well as a general Code of Conduct for school, canteen and bus, each class, with their teacher on day one will compile a “Promoting Positive Behaviour Plan” specifically for their class, containing rules, rewards, consequences discussed and agreed with everyone which will be clearly displayed in their class. **EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO LEARN AND NO CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO DISRUPT THE LEARNING OF OTHERS.** **BEHAVIOUR REFLECTION SHEET** - This will only be sent home AFTER the matter has been investigated by the Class Teacher.

Research has shown that incidents of inappropriate behaviour will increase - **IF PARENTS DO NOT SUPPORT THE SCHOOL WITH REGARDS TO BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES, ESPECIALLY IF PUPILS ARE MADE AWARE THAT THIS IS THE CASE.** Your support in this matter is, therefore much appreciated.

UNIFORM

This can be purchased from **Kemps, Newtownstewart**. Please ensure that your child wears the correct uniform to school each day. **The regulation PE Uniform ONLY will be allowed. i.e. Plain navy shorts/tracksuit bottoms, plain navy tracksuit bottoms and pale blue polo shirt.**

WEBSITE - Please check online for all the latest events, and policies; www.stpatricksgortin.com

UPDATED POLICIES

We have reviewed our Safeguarding Policies. . Copies can be obtained from the Office. Please feel free to make any suggestions regarding any of our Pastoral Care Policies.

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Leaflet is enclosed.

SAFEGUARDING - OPERATION ENCOMPASS - Please see letter attached.

INTIMATE CARE POLICY - can be obtained from the office - Please refer to this policy in relation to any toileting procedures, Menstrual Care etc...

ACCELERATED READING PROGRAMME – Please see letter enclosed.

BUS BEHAVIOUR -- EA TRANSPORT are responsible for the safety of pupils travelling to and from school. We will remind pupils regularly about wearing their seat belts and to remain at all times in their seats.. We would ask that parents also **TALK TO THEIR CHILDREN REGULARLY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS.** If you are concerned about any bus incidents, please contact Anne Kelly, Transport Officer 02882253018. Any incidents reported to the school will be discussed with the **whole class** by the teachers. .and if necessary, EA Transport will be informed...as you can appreciate, it is impossible for the school to monitor and investigate bus incidents when staff are not present on the bus....

TRANSPORT COMMUNICATION-Please ensure that the bus driver has a parent contact number to inform you of any changes to pick-ups. The school is often not updated and can therefore not update parents.

INTERNET SAFETY-As part of the school's ongoing, proactive approach to 'eSafety' and the safe use of digital technologies, we would like to take this opportunity to draw parents'/guardians' attention to the following; **Snapchat, Tik Tok Whatsapp Facebook, Instagram and other Social Media.** An increasing number of pupils are indicating that they have access to, or regularly use, social media platforms such as SNAPCHAT, TIK TOK, INSTAGRAM and/or FACEBOOK. We would like to remind parents/guardians that these platforms are 'AGE RESTRICTED' and **it is the view of the school they SHOULD NEVER be used by any primary school aged pupil.** It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to be fully aware of what their child is doing 'online.'

The school will not become involved in situations where pupils behave inappropriately on those platforms at home. Should instances of online bullying and abuse be reported to the school by concerned parents, we will advise those parents of how to report the incident to the appropriate authorities. It is your responsibility to keep your child safe from internet bullying while at home and by allowing them access to these types of platforms you are exposing your child to additional risk. We suggest to use the following 5 measures to ensure that you can monitor your child's mobile phone to ensure their safety

- (1) Agree that you can have access to their phone whenever you want...Check the phone at least 5 times per week.
- (2) Make sure you know what apps they are using (age appropriate) and know all their passwords for these apps.
- (3) Look and monitor the history of their calls, messages, contacts, web-site and pictures.
- (4) No child needs their phone after 8:30pm or before 8:30am....and definitely NO CHILD NEEDS THEIR PHONE IN THEIR BEDROOM AT NIGHT.
- (5) At all times talk to your child regarding the dangers of social media.... Remember 1 out of 5 children talk to a stranger every day through social media.

This is by no means to say that we agree with your child having access to social media, but if you insist on letting your child avail of it, then these points just might help to keep your child safe.

We would also like to draw your attention to some aspects of our School Mobile Phone Policy:

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones OR ANY CAMERA DEVICE in school.
- Pupils found using a mobile phone will have the phone removed by the teacher and a parent / guardian will have to visit the school to reclaim it. We thank you in advance for your continued cooperation and hope that the points mentioned above help you to keep your child as safe as possible. Many thanks for your support in this matter.

WWW.EASYFUNDRAISING.ORG.UK - If you are making any purchases online from retailers such as ASOS, Amazon, M & S, EBay, Argos etc. (over 1000 retailers listed), please go through the fundraising site – www.easyfundraising.org.uk as St Patrick's Primary School is registered as a cause and when you order and click on your cause, the retailer will give the school a small donation – as it says EASY FUNDRAISING – hassle free!

SEN - Individual meetings for the parents of all children on the SEN Register from Stage 1 and above will be arranged towards the end of September, with your child's class teacher. Teachers and Classroom Assistants will make out individual Plans and Targets for SEN pupils and these plans will be discussed with pupils and parents. To ensure that the targets are met, parental support is vital. Mrs Grugan will prioritise referrals for the 2024 -2025 school year with the Educational Psychologist in September. When these pupils have been assessed and recommendations have been made for extra support from WELB, this support will begin in the following school year.

SEND ACT – Please see leaflet enclosed, explaining the new 3 stages of SEN provision.

BEDTIMES - For pupils to reach their full potential it is essential they get the adequate hours of sleep required for their age. Bedtimes for pupils in Foundation/KS1 should be no later than 8.00 pm, KS2 – no later than 8.30 pm. Apart from discussing TV programmes after these times, teachers are fully aware, by pupils' behaviour and work rate, how much sleep they have had the previous night! As parents, it is your responsibility to ensure your child is coming into school, well rested and ready to give 100 per cent to the day's activities. Avoid screen time at least one hour before bedtime. Blue lights from screens can affect Melatonin (sleepy hormone production.) A bedtime routine that includes a bath and story time is a much better way for your child to unwind and prepare for bed. Try and keep the bedroom "Technology / T.V." free, to eliminate any distractions to sleep.

HEALTHY EATING - Please see Policy online – we operate a Healthy Eating Policy in the school for both break and lunches – again this has an enormous effect on pupils learning and behaviour. Pupils are advised to bring a bottle of water each day. Please see Policy on the website for recommended foods. **As stated in our Policy, fruit/veg/yoghurt only are to be eaten at break-time.** In response to our parent questionnaire, there will be a non-consumable option for Friday treats and all other awards throughout the year will be of the non-consumable variety.

EXTENDED SCHOOLS FUNDING – Information will be forwarded at a later date.

HOMEWORK – Homework will be sent home on Mondays with a weekly schedule. Please return all homework books and readers to school **each day in folder** for staff to check and mark. Please check and sign homework daily each evening. **If written homework is completed at the Afterschool Club, please check and sign also and ensure that spellings, mental maths and daily reading are completed each evening as these will NOT be covered in Afterschool Clubs.** The weekly schedule gives you some flexibility regarding what written homework is completed each evening. Please ensure all is completed by the end of the week. We would appreciate if older pupils would back the homework books at the beginning of the school year.

SCHOOL BAGS - We ask that nothing is brought to school each day apart from HW, a break/lunch and a water bottle ..We will provide all stationary.P1 and P2 do NOT need a schoolbag..

AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL ...TAKE A FEW PRECIOUS MOMENTS EACH EVENING TO SWITCH OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND SPEND THE TIME INSTEAD READING AND CHATTING TO YOUR CHILD ON A ONE TO ONE WHILE THEY STILL WANT TO DO IT!!:)

Patience is not the ability to wait,
but the ability to keep a good
attitude while waiting.

Joyce Meyer

We would really appreciate if you would include this checklist with all the correspondence to be returned.

CHECKLIST:

TO BE RETURNED ON OR BEFORE MONDAY 16th SEPTEMBER

Please include this checklist with the following

				PLEASE TICK BOX
1	MUSIC MONEY	P1-P7	£9.00 (per child)	
2	COACH MONEY (Robbie)	P1-P7	£6.00 (per child)	
3	GENERAL CONSENT FORM	COMPLETE ONLINE		
4	DATA COLLECTION FORM (PLEASE SUBMIT ONLINE)	COMPLETE ONLINE		

SIGNED: _____ **(Parent/Guardian)**

CHILD/CHILDREN'S NAME:



Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are very excited to announce that we have invested in the Accelerated Reader programme for the coming school year for P4-P7 PUPILS..

All proceeds from Fundraisers this year will go to fund this programme-annual cost-£1400..We would also appreciate if parents would continue donating any books from home which we can use for each of the levels..

Accelerated Reader is a motivational tool to encourage and develop independent reading. The children will do an online reading assessment which gives us a detailed overview of their comprehension ability. Based on this assessment each child will be provided with a book range from which they can select independent reading books from.

Once the online reading assessment is completed by each pupil in September to establish their reading level, the programme will begin and after each block of 10 weeks at the end of each term pupils will complete the assessment again to monitor and change levels if needed.

In school we will provide the children with time to read independently-20 mins daily.. and take their quiz on their book. We will be asking that children also read as much as possible at home as part of their homework.

The children will take fun motivational quizzes to test their comprehension of the books they have read. The children will be set an individual points target to act as a form of motivation and they will receive a small prize for reaching their target each term..

Teachers will have access to detailed reports detailing pupils reading each day at home and school as well as how many points they have and how many words they have read each day...This class report will be shared with the class each morning as a motivator!

Parents will also be kept updated with this information and will be given a detailed progress report at parents meetings..

The books they read can come from a variety of sources including the school and class library, local library, books they have at home, bookshops etc. You can search for suitable Accelerated Reader books via this free online tool: www.arbookfind.co.uk

As with any new programme it will take time to develop it within the school so we thank you in anticipation of your continued support and understanding.

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to update you about our school's participation in Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between Police and Schools. It is aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence.

Operation Encompass is already established across all of England and Wales and is now coming to Northern Ireland. It is a very simple idea, but one that will help us to support and protect vulnerable children. When the Police attend an incident of domestic violence where one of our pupils is present, they will inform the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection at the start of the next school day. This information is shared in strict confidence and school staff are only told on a need-to-know basis.

Following any notification from the PSNI, our staff will provide immediate support to any child who has been the victim of domestic abuse. We know that when children do witness domestic abuse at home, this is a highly traumatic experience for them. By taking part in Operation Encompass, we can provide tailored and compassionate support to our pupils, in line with our school ethos. This builds on our existing commitment to child safeguarding.

Should you wish to find out more information, please contact the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Grugan, or alternatively you can read more about Operation Encompass at www.operationencompass.org.

Yours Sincerely,

Mary Grugan (Principal)

PROVISIONAL PUPIL HOLIDAYS 2024-2025 -these dates are not all confirmed yet-there may be a few changes to SDs

Monday 28th October – Friday 1st Nov 2024 inclusive	Halloween Holidays	H
Fri 15th November		H
Monday 23rd December – Friday 3rd January 2025 inclusive	Christmas Holidays	H
Wednesday 12th February – Friday 14th February 2025 inclusive	Mid-term	H
Monday 17th March 2025	St. Patrick’s Day	H
Friday 18th April – Monday 28th April inclusive	Easter Holidays	H
Monday 5th May	Bank Holiday	BH
Friday 23rd May – Monday 26th May inclusive		H
Friday 13th June		H
Monday 30th June	Holiday	H

Stage 2 of Special Educational provision

Stage 2

- School delivered special educational provision plus external provision e.g. EA or HSC Trust
- PLP is required
- A smaller number of children will need this provision
- The responsibility lies with the school and EA
- Children are in mainstream schools, (and by exception Special Schools or LS centres for the purposes of assessment)
- Reasonable adjustments, additional strategies and approaches plus resources, advice, support and training through EA SEN support

If a child does not make suitable progress, despite the external support from the EA at **Stage 2**, the child may require consideration for a statutory assessment.

If the EA agree to carry out a statutory assessment and then decide to issue a Statement, the child will then move to **Stage 3** of the Code.

Stage 3 of Special Educational Provision

Stage 3

- The child has a Statement of SEN
- School and EA deliver special educational provision plus any relevant treatment or service identified by a HSC Trust
- PLP is required
- A smaller number of children will need this provision
- The responsibility lies with the school and the EA—with input from a HSC Trust where relevant
- Children are in mainstream schools, LS centres attached to mainstream schools or special schools (as determined within the Statement)
- Reasonable adjustments, school delivered special educational provision are implemented plus EA provision as set out in the Statement

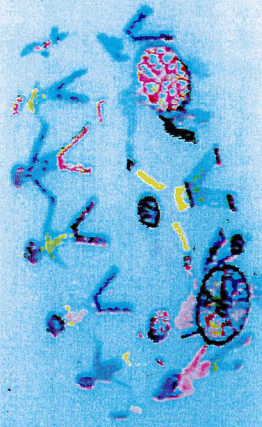
For more information see:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/>



Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice

Information for Parents and Young people



CYPS

SEND Implementation Team

www.eani.org.uk

June 2021

What is the SEN Code of Practice?

The Department of Education (DE) have published a draft SEN Code of Practice (the SEN Code). The SEN Code provides practical guidance for the delivery of the new Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion Framework. Schools, the Education Authority (EA), health and social care authorities and others are expected to follow the guidance in the SEN Code.

Why do we need a SEN Code?

DE have developed a Special Educational Needs Framework (the SEN Framework). This SEN Framework has 3 parts;

- ◊ The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland 2016)
- ◊ New SEN Regulations; and
- ◊ A new SEN Code of Practice

The SEN Code is practical guidance which is based on the Act and Regulations. Schools use the guidance in the SEN Code to deliver a clear and consistent approach for identifying and providing for children with SEN. The focus on the new SEN Framework is on the delivery of special educational provision which is aimed at helping every child make progress and improve their individual outcomes.

What is meant by Special Educational Needs?

In law, a pupil is described as having SEN if they have a **significantly greater difficulty** in learning than the majority of children their age, **which calls for special educational provision to be made for them**. Special educational provision means educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision which children of a similar age receive in an ordinary school.

A pupil also has SEN if they have a disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Only children who have SEN are placed on the SEN Register in school. Children not on the SEN Register have their learning needs met through whole school educational provision which includes differentiation and reasonable adjustments.

What are the Stages of Special Educational Provision in the SEN Code ?

The SEN Code has 3 stages of delivery of special educational provision. The 3 Stages focus on the level of intensity of the special educational provision needed for each child to improve their individual outcomes. **Children on the SEN Register will be placed on either Stage 1, 2 or 3 of the SEN Code** depending on the level of SEN provision they are receiving.

Stage 1 of Special Educational Provision

Stage 1

- School delivered special educational provision
- Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is required
- The majority of SENs will be met through this stage
- Responsibility lies with the school
- Children are in mainstream schools and classes
- Reasonable adjustments and additional strategies and approaches are aimed at meeting the child's SEN

Will my child stay at Stage 1 of the Code?

Often a child makes progress in response to school delivered special educational provision at **Stage 1**. If your child does not make adequate progress and continues to experience significant difficulties despite the school fully implementing a wide range of provision at **Stage 1**, school may consider seeking external support or advice from the Education Authority or Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust.

Summary of Procedures for a Pupil/Teacher Reporting a Safeguarding Incident

Child makes disclosure or teacher has concerns regarding abuse or neglect.

Matter is referred to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Principal informed by Designated Teacher. Plan of action agreed. Referrer advised of plan.

No referral to Social Services/ Parents or Carers informed of concerns.

Referral to Social Services.

School will continue to support and monitor pupil/s as appropriate.

Representative from school will work with other services as part of the safeguarding plan.

This leaflet is intended only as a summary of the main aspects of the School's Child Protection Policy. The full policy document can be obtained from the School Office. An abbreviated version is available in the Student Planner.

Summary of Procedures for Parents/Carers who wish to refer a Safeguarding Concern

The guidance below outlines procedures for parents/carers when raising a concern.

I have a concern about my or a child's safety.

I can talk to the Form Teacher or Head of Year.

If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Principal.

If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

At any time a parent can talk to a Social Worker at the Gateway Team (Western Trust)

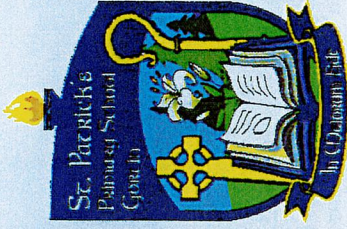
Tel: 028 7131 4090 (Derry)

or the PSNI at the Public Protection Unit

Tel: 999 (Emergency) or 101(Non-Urgent)

If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman

Tel: 0800 343 424



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY and PROCEDURES A SUMMARY

“Our School Child Protection Policy aims to protect and support each child’s development in ways which will foster a safeguarding ethos, security, confidence, independence and will be implemented by all personnel in the school.”

Child Protection Policy

Designated Teachers:
Mrs Mary Grugan
Mrs Caoimhe Cunningham
Mrs Ciara Bradley

Introduction

Child Protection is concerned with the provision of a suitable environment for children to develop and mature, safe, as far as possible, from psychological or physical harm.

All members of staff have a duty to help protect children from abuse or the risk of abuse and must be aware of correct procedures to safeguard all those in our care.

Staff see children on a day-to-day basis over long periods of time and are in a unique position to be able to notice physical and behavioural indicators which may be evidence of abuse. We aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting safeguarding any concerns raised in a professional manner.

Guiding Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount at all times.
- Every child has a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, members of staff and students will be respected in so far as legal requirements permit.
- Employees and all working with students in Loreto are subject to Enhanced Disclosure Checks by Access N.I.

Designated Teacher

Any member of staff who knows or suspects that a child is being harmed or at risk of being harmed has a duty to convey his/her concern to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to the Principal.

A Safeguarding Team – Mr Patrick Broilly & Ms Onagh McKenna (Board of Governors) Mrs Mary Grugan Mrs Caoimhe Cunningham (Designated Teachers) & Mrs Ciara Bradley (Deputy Designated Teacher) is in place, ensuring that safeguarding procedures are adhered to.

Responsibility to Report

Any member of staff who knows or suspects that a pupil is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed, has a duty to convey his/her concern to the Designated Teacher Mrs Mary Grugan or Principal.

Every possible care is taken to minimise the possibility of mistaken referrals but this cannot be guaranteed. **The consequences of not reporting suspicions if a child has been abused could be far more serious than making a report which proves to be unfounded.**

Categories of Abuse

- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Exploitation- Child Sexual Exploitation

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Detection of abuse is seldom straightforward. None of the indicators, either singly, or in any combination, prove conclusively that a child has been abused.

Physical Abuse - Unexplained marks/injuries; scratches, human bite marks or welts, bruises, burns, untreated injuries; chronic runaway; self-mutilation tendencies; aggressive or withdrawn, fear of returning home.

Neglect - Medical/physical/special needs of child not being met; looks very thin, poorly, sad; constant hunger; steals food; lack of energy; constant tiredness; poor hygiene; inappropriate dress; frequent absenteeism; low self-esteem; repeated accidents.

Emotional Abuse - Sudden speech disorders; wetting and soiling; signs of mutilation; frequent vomiting; poor peer relationships; attention seeking/needing behaviour; fear of change.

Sexual Abuse - Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas; itching in genital areas; stained or bloody underwear; bruises on inner thighs or buttocks; pain on urination; difficulty walking or sitting; eating disorders; low self-esteem; association with older people, outside the usual range of contacts, inappropriate language, sexual knowledge for age group.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse, where young people are exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliation and degrading sexual assaults. Child Sexual Exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

For further information visit the Safeguarding Board N.I. website www.safeguardingni.org

Role of Members of Staff

In the event that a staff member becomes aware or suspects that a child is a victim of child abuse it is important that the response is sensitive and appropriate.

In all cases, staff will act promptly, bringing concerns to the attention of the Designated Teachers Mrs Mary Grugan and Mrs Caoimhe Cunningham or Deputy Designated Teacher Mrs Ciara Bradley.

In cases where a child makes a disclosure, staff will:

- Listen to what the child says without showing or expressing shock.
- Allow the pupil to tell what has happened in her own words without interrupting or interrogating her.
- Reassure the child that what she has said has been understood and that her interests are paramount.
- Explain the obligation to refer the matter in order to seek help for the child.
- Not give a guarantee of confidentiality.
- Make written notes at the earliest opportunity but not as the pupil talks. Staff will try to write down the actual words used.
- Keep notes factual and securely stored.
- Refer the matter to the Designated Teacher as a matter of urgency.

Who Needs To Know?

It is not always possible to provide teachers with the full details of a child's circumstances. Information is shared in the interest of the pupil's welfare but this is balanced against pupil and parental rights to confidentiality.

Parents will be kept informed of who is notified within school and other agencies, unless doing so would place the child at further risk.



Family Prayer for Return to School

God our Father, we give you thanks as our children
return to their school communities.
We entrust them to the tender care of your son, Jesus.
May they know that he is with them each day,
in their joy, in their learning,
and when they are unsure or afraid.
We ask your blessing on all who will support and
encourage them throughout the year.
May we be guided by the Holy Spirit in the ways of
Jesus, Amen.



**DERRY DIOCESAN
CATECHETICAL
CENTRE**

