



## Isle of Man Department of Education, Sport & Culture

### St Johns School Child Protection Policy



#### INTRODUCTION

**St Johns Primary School takes its duty towards all its pupils who have been entrusted to its care very seriously and seeks to provide a school environment where all children are safe, secure, valued, respected, and listened to.**

**St Johns School believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice that protects them.**

#### SAFEGUARDING

All children in the Isle of Man will:

- Be Healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Prosper

Safeguarding has two elements:

1. Protecting children from maltreatment.
2. Preventing impairment of children's health or development.

Promoting welfare is a proactive responsibility:

- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.
- Child protection is defined as being part of safeguarding and promoting welfare: Child protection is the term used to refer to the activity taken to protect children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Key features:

- Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- A clear statement of the organisation's responsibilities towards children available for all staff.
- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or in contact with children and families.
- Safe recruitment procedures in place (safe people, codes of conduct) service level agreements, contracting and commissioning arrangements.
- To take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- Whistle-blowing.
- Dealing with complaints.
- Leadership in safeguarding.
- Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- Effective information sharing.
- Involving young people.
- Monitoring and reviewing.

## **CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE**

Key documents, which inform this policy are:

1. Isle of Man Safeguarding Children Board Procedures.
2. Chief Minister's Strategy for Children and Young People.
3. Isle of Man Children's Plan 2009-2012.
4. DFEE circular 10/95.
5. The Children Act 1989.
6. Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999.
7. Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for safeguarding and child protection in this school is:

**Mrs Tracy Willoughby (Headteacher)**

In her absence, these matters will be dealt with by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Mr Matthew Callister (Deputy Headteacher)**

St Johns School School aims to support every young person to achieve the five outcomes identified in the Chief Minister's Strategy for Children and Young People. Consequently the overall aim of this policy to safeguard and promote the health of the children in our care (in situations where child abuse is suspected, our paramount responsibility is to the child).

This will be achieved by:

- Continuing to develop awareness in all staff of the need for Child Protection (particular care should be taken with children with disabilities and SEN) and their responsibilities in identifying abuse.
- Ensuring that all members of staff are aware of referral procedures within the school.
- Monitor children who have been identified as 'at risk'.
- Ensuring that outside agencies are involved where appropriate.
- Ensuring that key concepts of Child Protection are integrated within the curriculum especially via PSHE / SEAL.
- Sustaining an environment where children feel secure, have their viewpoints valued, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

School procedures:

Any member of staff with an issue or concern relating to Child Protection should immediately discuss it with the designated member of staff (see above) and it should be made clear to students that

**CONFIDENTIALITY CANNOT BE GUARANTEED IN RESPECT OF CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES.**

The designated member of staff (Mrs Willoughby) will then decide on an appropriate course of action (guided by Isle of Man Safeguarding Board Procedures).

Information for parents/carers will be available, telling them that the staff are required to follow the procedures laid down by the Isle of Man Safeguarding Board.

**Allegations against school staff:** Teachers must protect themselves especially when meeting on a one-to-one basis with students and staff should bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued. Teachers who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the Headteacher so that Isle of Man Safeguarding Children Board Procedures (and DFEE circular 10195) procedures can be followed.

**Dealing with disclosures of abuse:**

If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about possible abuse there are a number of things that should be done to support

- Inform the child that this information will now have to be passed on.
- Stay calm and be available to listen.
- Listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying.
- Do not question or pressure.
- Don't put words into the child's mouth but note the main points carefully.
- Keep a full record - date, time, what the child did, said, etc.
- Reassure the child and let them know they were right to inform us.
- Immediately inform Mrs Willoughby or Mr Callister.

**Monitoring and record keeping:**

It is essential that accurate records be kept where there are concerns about the welfare of a child. These records should then be kept in secure, confidential files, which are separate from the child's school records. These records will be kept in a secure and locked store in the Head of School's office. It is important to recognise that regulations published in 1989 do not authorise or require the disclosure to parents of any written information relating to Child Protection. The preferred practice is for parents to be informed of and agree to any referral being made (unless it relates to Sexual Abuse).

**Staff must keep the Designated Teacher informed of:**

- Poor attendance & punctuality.
- Concerns about appearance and dress.
- Changed or unusual behaviour.
- Concerns about health and emotional well being.
- Deterioration in educational progress.
- Discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child.
- Concerns about home conditions or situations.
- Concerns about pupil on pupil abuse (including serious bullying).

**'Logging a Concern'** forms will be used by staff to record any of the above issues. These will be available in the staff room and once completed should be handed to the Designated Teacher **immediately**.

When there is suspicion of significant harm to a child and a referral is made as much information as possible should be given about the nature of the suspicions, the child and the family. Use of previous records (if available) may prove to be particularly useful in this respect.

**NB** Any referral to Social Services by telephone must be confirmed with the specified written form and a copy kept on the confidential school file. A note must be made of the Duty Social Worker and the time at which the call is made. If parents have not been informed about (or if they have not agreed to) the referral being made this must be reported to Social Services.

**See Appendix 1 for advice to staff**

**See Appendix 2 for types of child abuse**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

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## Appendix 1

### Advice and reminders for Staff Regarding Child Protection Issues:

Please note the guidelines below:

1. If a child asks to or begins to confide in you:

Explain that you may need to tell someone else who can help them and make it clear that you cannot promise confidentiality. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgment. Too early – they may think you do not want to listen. Leave it till the end and they may feel misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

2. If the child continues:

Listen calmly and without prompting. Listen carefully - reassure them that they were right to tell you. Remain calm and do not overreact.

Don't try to investigate or ask leading questions. **DO NOT INTERVIEW THE CHILD.** Tell the child that you have a duty to inform Mrs Willoughby or Mr Callister.

Report your concerns to Mrs Willoughby or Mr Callister immediately. You may report your concerns verbally initially if necessary but you must record them on the 'Logging a Concern' form and pass this directly to Mrs Willoughby or Mr Callister. Include dates, times, what you have observed, what the child has said to you and your reply.

3. Mrs Willoughby or Mr Callister will follow the Isle of Man Safeguarding Children Board Procedures.

#### Reporting concerns

If you are unsure or in any doubt you should report any concerns to Mrs Willoughby or Mr Callister.

Reports may be needed for Child Protection Case conferences or the criminal/civil courts. Consequently records and reports should be:

- Factual (no opinions).
- Non-judgmental (no assumptions).
- Clear
- Accurate.
- Relevant.

The role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) (Mrs Willoughby or in her absence Mr Callister.):

- To ensure that all staff know who are the Designated Teachers responsible for Child Protection issues.
- To refer promptly all cases of suspected child abuse to social services or to the police child protection team. If a parent arrives to collect the child before the social worker has arrived then it must be remembered that we have no right to prevent the removal of the child. However, if there are clear signs of physical risk or threat the Police should be called.
- To organise regular training on Child Protection within the School.
- To ensure that all staff know about and have access to Isle of Man Safeguarding Children Board Procedures (refer staff to explore <http://www.isleofmanscb.im>).
- To co-ordinate action where child abuse is suspected.
- To keep under review this whole school policy on Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- To attend case conferences or nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on her behalf.
- Maintain records of case conferences and other sensitive information in a secure confidential file and to disseminate information about the child only on a 'need to know basis'.
- To pass on records and inform the key worker when a child who is on the Child Protection register leaves the school. The custodian of the register must also be informed.
- To raise staff awareness and confidence on child protection procedures and to ensure new staff are aware of these procedures.
- To keep up to date with current practice by participating in training opportunities wherever possible.

## **Appendix 2 DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

The following definitions of abuse are set out in statutory government guidance and provide the framework for responding to risk to children.

- Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment.
- A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.
- Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

### **Physical abuse**

- Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child - see definition of Fabricated or Induced Illness.

### **Emotional abuse**

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development and may involve:

Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person

Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction

Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another

Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

Exploiting and corrupting children.

- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual abuse**

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.
- Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation.
- Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape under Section 5 Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## **Neglect**

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to:

Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)

Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger

Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)

Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.