



Principal: Miss S Donoghue

Convent of Mercy Nursery School, Folly Lane, Downpatrick, BT30 6NF, Tel: 44614682

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **DEALING WITH YOUR CONCERNS**

We at the Convent of Mercy Nursery School value parents as partners in the education of our pupils. The views of parents are significant and we encourage any positive contribution which parents make to the life of the school.

From time to time a parent may have a concern about some aspect of their child's life at school. Working in partnership with parents, it is the school's aim that any concern is dealt with quickly and efficiently, to the satisfaction of all.

### **HOW DO I RAISE A CONCERN?**

- Make an appointment to see the class teacher, if the matter chiefly concerns your child's progress in school.
- Make an appointment to see the Principal. Your concerns will be noted in writing and the matter investigated.
- The Principal will inform you of any findings made and action to be taken, if deemed necessary.
- If you are not satisfied with the decision reached in any matter, you are encouraged to put your concerns in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. The matter will be considered at the next meeting of the Governors.
- The Governors will respond in writing to your concern, detailing the outcome of their deliberation and action to be taken, if any.
- Having followed the procedures outlined, parents not satisfied with the decision of the Board of Governors should make contact with the controlling body, the Education Authority / CCMS.

The Convent of Mercy Nursery School is a very busy school. Should you require an appointment with a teacher, the following times are best:

- 1 After school ends.
- 2 Before school begins.

The Principal operates an open door policy for parents and will make herself available to them, whenever possible. However, as she too has a significant teaching and administrative load, it is advisable to make an appointment

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

*Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with **promotion and preventative** activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection.*

*(Co- operating To Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2016)*

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. Our policy and procedures on child protection are designed to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff, and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected.

### **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE:**

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

**Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engaging in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Designated Person for Child Protection is: Miss Sinead Donoghue (Principal)

Deputy Designated Person is: Mrs McCoy (Teacher)

Chairperson of the Board of Governors: Mrs Siobhan Slavin

If a member of staff is concerned about a child, or if a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff, which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, the member of staff must act promptly:

- ❑ Designated Person for child protection.
- ❑ A written record will be made and a course of action followed.
- ❑ Records must include factual information, i.e. date, time, observations, details of conversations and persons present.

The Designated Person, or in her absence the Principal/ Deputy Designated Person will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. – “If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral”.

The Designated Person may seek clarification or advice from the Education Authority or CCMS'S Designated Officer or their Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Designated Person will inform the Education Authority and CCMS's Designated Officer for Child Protection in an envelope marked 'Confidential – Child Protection'.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Designated Person must be informed immediately. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be advised immediately and the necessary measures taken.

If the complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Person must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

It is important to note that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held "In Confidence". We will always act in the best interests of the child.