



Child Protection Policy

Shellybanks Educate Together National School

At Shellybanks ETNS We believe that all children have the right to be safe in our society and that we must have in place procedures that will help protect them. This policy has been drawn up in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines. It addresses the responsibilities of the school in the following areas:

- Prevention – Curriculum provision.
- Procedures – Procedures for dealing with concerns/disclosures.
- Practice – Best practice in child Protection.

This policy is available to all staff members on the school Network and a copy of the '*Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures*' (DES, 2011) and '*Children First*' (Dept. Of Children, 2011) is available to all in the staff library, to allow all staff members to familiarise themselves with correct child protection procedures.

The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of this overall child protection policy.

Aims

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment for all pupils.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of what action to take when dealing with a child protection issue.
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community.
- Put in practice procedures to protect all pupils and staff.
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of and familiar with the "Children First" and DES guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosures of child abuse.
- Provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all school staff.

Prevention

The 'Stay Safe Programme' is the primary resource used in Shellybanks E.T.N.S. to provide education for children on abuse prevention. The programme is taught as part of the school's SPHE curriculum under the strand units Safety and Protection and Personal Safety.

The formal lessons will be taught in their entirety every second year, in accordance with the SPHE two year cycle.

The staff will reinforce the messages of the programme whenever possible.



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Parents/Guardians will be informed at various meetings that the “Stay Safe” programme is used at all class levels in the school and a copy of “Stay safe - A Parent’s Guide” will be provided.

Child Protection at Shellybanks ETNS:

Schools have an obligation to provide students with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well-being and protect them from harm. The school’s personnel are placed purposefully to observe changes in behaviour, failure to develop or outward signs of abuse in pupils.

- **The Board nominates the Principal (Therese Gamble) as the designated liaison person (DLP)** to act as a liaison with outside agencies such as health board and as a resource person to any staff having child protection concerns.
- In the absence of the Principal, Anne Marie Lillis **will act as Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP)**
- The Board will ensure that appropriate and on-going training as necessary will be available for the DLP and the DDLP.
- Recognising that the safety and well being of children attending the school is a priority, the Board undertakes to include Child Protection & Health & Safety matters as items on the agenda of all Board meetings forthwith.
- The Board will ensure that all school staff, teaching and non-teaching are aware of their obligations under the guidelines detailed in ‘*Children First*’ and the procedures to be followed in the event of concern.
- The Board recognises that it has two duties of care. The primary duty is the protection, safety and welfare of the children attending Shellybanks ETNS. The Board as an employer also has duties and responsibilities towards its employees.
- As an employer, the Board will seek legal advice if an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee.
- Employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations. Any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively. The employee should be treated fairly which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry. The Board accepts that the principles of natural justice and fair procedures must be adhered to.
- The Board believes that the academic, personal and social development of children flourishes in a culture where good relationships are encouraged, people feel valued and respected and appropriate support is available for those in difficulty.
- The Board is committed to the maintenance of the environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to express themselves and are listened to. All children in the school will be made aware that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried. In addition, opportunities will be included in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to keep them safe.



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- The Board undertakes to circulate this Child Protection Policy Statement to all parents and guardians. This policy statement and '*Children First*' will be available for viewing at the school office and also will be posted on the school website.
- This policy statement regarding Child Protection at Shellybanks ETNS applies to all staff, members of the Board of Management, volunteers and contractors working in the school.
- This policy statement will be subject to review at the start of each academic year forthwith. In its policies, practices and activities, Shellybanks ETNS will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:
 - Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations
 - Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
 - Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children
 - Protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
 - Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The following Practices will be adopted:

- The class teacher will always stay with their class (e.g. visitors/ guests/coaches/trips etc.)
- Toileting accidents
 - Wetting: children will be provided with clean clothes to change themselves. If child is unable to change themselves without help, 2 staff members will assist child.
 - Soiling: parents will always be contacted for soiling incidents. Clean clothes and wipes will be provided for children who can clean and change themselves. The parents of children who are unable to clean and change themselves will be asked to come to the school to clean and change the child. In the event of the parent being unavailable and they agree to it a teacher/SNA will help the child to change in the presence of another member of staff.
- Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs – a procedure will be agreed between the teachers, SNAs and parents in question.
- During one to one teaching the door will be left open.
- Garda vetting of teaching and non-teaching staff as outlined in DES circulars mandatory for the recruitment and selection of all staff.
- Supervision of pupils – children will never be left unsupervised at school. In the case of wet playtime, classroom doors will be left open and teachers on duty will share the supervision of all classes while teachers have their lunch.
- Internet Use – An Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) will be implemented in the school.



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- Mobile Phones – Our Mobile Phone Policy states that phones may not be used by pupils at any time during the school day, on the school grounds. Teachers/Classroom staff may not use their phone during teaching time except in an emergency.
- The school's code of behaviour has been drawn up to reflect the child protection procedures as outlined in this policy. Our attendance policy also takes into account these procedures.

While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable a full record of the event should be made and reported to the Principal and the BOM.

Strategy

DLP and Deputy DLP	The Principal (Therese Gamble) will act as the Designated Liaison Person and Anne Marie Lillis is the Designated Deputy Liaison Person
BOM	The Chairperson of the Board of Management is responsible for Child Protection.
Lines of Communication	Clear lines of communication are in place if any member of the school personnel suspects that a child may be a victim of abuse.
Highlighted Concern Form	All concerns are written on the Highlighted Concern Form and then handed to the DLP or deputy DLP who then takes the appropriate action.
Training	The DLP and his deputy regularly attend training and then update school personnel of changes in procedures etc.

We believe the above strategy is effective in dealing with highlighted child protection concerns.

Date Agreed	Written By	Review Date
May 2015	Board of Management	May 2016

Highlighted Concern form



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Date:

Time:

Child:

Handed over to DLP on (Date):

Child Protection Guidelines Checklist for School Employees

Designated Liaison Person: Therese Gamble

Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Anne Marie Gamble



If a child discloses information to you:

- Listen
- Do not ask leading questions
- Offer reassurance but do not promise not to tell
- Explain that other adults may need to be told - DLP
- Do not stop the child speaking
- Do not over react or comment
- Inform DLP - If you have a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern that a child is at risk or has suffered abuse, the DLP should contact the Health Board for advice
- At the earliest opportunity, record accurately what the child has said – Using the child's own words. Record date/time and context of the disclosure. Use child's registration number – Not child's name
- Facts only
- Sketch signs of physical injury if appropriate
- Retain records for a period of 21 years in keeping with the school's Record Keeping Policy

The following should also be reported to the DLP:

- An account from a person who saw a child being abused
- Injury consistent with abuse
- Dysfunctional behaviour
- Implausible explanations for injury or behaviour
- Consistent evidence over a period of time that a child is being emotionally or physically neglected

Health Board Response:

- School is asked to monitor the situation
- Formal report is requested , sent by DLP and on receipt case is allocated to Social Worker
- Preliminary enquiry – Screening process
- Initial assessment

Possible outcomes:

- Case closed
- Family support
- Child Protection Plan (usually following a case conference)



PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS



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In case of Emergency or outside Health Board office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána

A. To Principal Social Worker :

1. Details of Child:

Name: _____

Male: Female:

Address: _____

Age/D.O.B.: _____

School: _____

1a. Name of Mother: _____

Name of Father: _____

Address of Mother if different to Child: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Address of Father if different to Child: _____

Telephone Number: _____

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known: _____

1c. Household Composition:

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of	Additional Information
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		Birth	e.g.School/Occupation

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) (if known).

Please state Primary reason for referral:

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: _____ Age: _____

Male: Female:



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Address: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Occupation: _____

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: _____

School: _____

Public Health Nurse: _____

Gardai: _____

G.P.: _____

Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club _____

Hospital: _____

Other, Specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs: _____

4a. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department? Yes / No

4b. Are the Parents/Legal Guardians supportive? Yes / No

5. Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re. Limitations of confidentiality)

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Address: _____



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Telephone Number: _____

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family:

6. Details of Person completing form:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Occupation: _____

Signed: _____

Guidance Notes:



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Health Boards have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. Health Boards therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Board Personnel
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health boards
- Designated person in a voluntary or community agency
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Board personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

Health Boards aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Board cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her.

This policy was ratified by the Board of management on 20th January, 2015

This policy was reviewed by Board of Management on 5th October, 2015

Next date of review: September, 2016

Signed:

Principal: Therese Gamble

Chairperson: Jessica Ryan

Date for review: September, 2016