



CREGAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

"A Family of Learning at the Heart of the Community"

Child Protection & Safeguarding (Parent Copy 2021-22)



School Attendance & Absence



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

We in Cregagh Primary School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge and as a result we will take reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare and safety is preserved.

Mrs Pearson is Designated teacher with overall responsibility for child protection and Mr Higginson is deputy Designated Teacher.

There are clear procedures in place to be followed where the school has been alerted to possible abuse. These procedures provide for a second member of staff to assume responsibility if the Designated teacher is absent or is the subject of an allegation.

All staff (teaching and non-teaching) should be aware of signs of abuse, be alert to these and also be aware of procedures to be followed. To this end Child Protection Training will be given to all staff on a regular basis.

In the event of an allegation being made the designated teacher and or Principal will if necessary make a referral either to Social Services or Police.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding is more than Child Protection. **Safeguarding** begins with *promotion and preventative activity that* 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 for families and early intervention to meet the needs of the children. **Child Protection** refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm.

Cregagh Primary School has established a school safeguarding team which includes the Principal, the Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated teacher, Designated Governor and Chairperson of the Governors (Mrs Moyra Hunter). This team meets on a regular basis to discuss and monitor ongoing safeguarding within the school.

The School will also work with a number of Agencies to promote Safeguarding. These will include:

- NSPCC *Staying Safe* and *Speak Out, Stay Safe* Programmes
- Women's Aid Helping Hands Programme
- The Outer South and East Belfast Family Support HUB
- Love for Life
- School's Family Engagement Worker Alex Barnes (Barnardos/East Belfast Family Connections)
- Barnardo's - **Time 4 Me** counselling service

Principles for the Protection of Children

1. The welfare of the child is paramount and overrides all other consideration;
2. All children have the fundamental right to be protected from harm;
3. Careful consideration must be given to young children who have special educational needs as such children may be especially vulnerable;
4. Children have the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously, and to be consulted according to his/her age and understanding about the proposed action;
5. Where child abuse is suspected it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the appropriate reporting and recording procedures are set in motion as quickly as possible. This will normally involve Social Services or the Police and the designated officer of EA-SE;
6. The school will maintain a summary of child protection arrangements including arrangements for parents to report concerns. These will be circulated to parents at the start of each new full-term;
7. Children in Cregagh Primary School should be aware of what they should do and who to go to should they need advice.

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF SUSPECTED/DISCLOSED CHILD ABUSE IN SCHOOL

- If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, which gives rise to concerns over possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly;
- He/she should not investigate but should report those concerns to the Designated Teacher (Mrs Pearson), and discuss the matter with her and make full notes;
- The Designated Teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made;

- The Principal with the Designated teacher, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services;
- The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the EA (South Eastern Region's) Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No referral will be made without fullest consideration and on appropriate advice;
- Where there are concerns about possible abuse the Principal will inform: Social Services and EA's Designated Officer;
- If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Complaints of possible child abuse about a member of Staff

- If a complaint of possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal or Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply.
- Where the matter is referred to Social Services the member of staff will be removed from duties involving children and may be suspended.
- If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and they will ensure the necessary action is taken.



How can a parent raise a concern about his/her child's or another child's safety?

- Parents may make known their concerns about their (or another) child's safety by speaking to the class teacher, Mrs Pearson (Designated Teacher) or Mr Heggarty (Principal).

- Once a concern has been voiced the Designated Teacher will agree to keep the parent informed on the progress and outcome of their complaint.

- Should the parents be dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may speak directly to the Principal and /or the Chair of the Board of Governors.





Safeguarding (Child Protection)

How a Parent can 'Report a Concern' about a child's Safety

Any parent can report a concern regarding the safety of their child or any other child

Step 1

'I have a concern about my child (or any other child)'



Step 2

'I can talk to the class teacher of this child'



Step 3

'If I am still concerned I can talk to Mrs Pearson, the Designated Teacher,
(or if Mrs Pearson is unavailable, Mr Higginson, the Deputy Designated Teacher)'



Step 4

'If I am still concerned I can talk to the Principal (Mr Heggarty)'



Step 5

"If I am still concerned I can talk (or write) to Mrs. Moyra Hunter,
Chairperson of the Board of Governors."



Step 6

'Also, at any time I can contact the following:'

Social Services (Knockbreda Centre, Belfast) – Telephone: 028 90 631770

PSNI – Ask for the Child Protection Unit, Newtownards – Telephone: 0845 600 8000

Referral to Social Services

Cregagh Primary school will undertake referral to Social Services under the following circumstances.

- A child discloses or there is evidence of suspected sexual abuse.
- A child discloses or there is evidence of suspected physical abuse.
- A child discloses or there is evidence of emotional abuse.
- A parent presents as being under the influence of either alcohol or drugs.
- There is sufficient cause for concern that a child's physical needs are being neglected.
- Any suspicion of Domestic Violence within the family home will be reported to social services.

Transfer of Records

If there is a concern of a Child Protection nature, then the school will pass it on to the pupil's new school at transfer.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Where it is necessary to safeguard children information will be shared with other statutory agencies in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the school Data Protection Policy and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

**THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS ALWAYS OF
PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO ALL STAFF AT
CREGAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*A copy of the full Child protection Policy
is available at the school office by arrangement*



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

Regular school attendance is an important part of giving your child the best possible start in life. Talking to your child and their teachers could help solve any difficulties in getting your child to go to school - and there are other forms of support available if you still have problems.

Regular school attendance – why is it so important?

Going to school regularly is important for your child's future. For example, children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams.

Good attendance shows potential employers that your child is reliable. Research suggests that children who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime.

All schools are required to record details of pupils' attendance and absence at school. They do so at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. If your child is absent, it is required that you inform the school the reason for the absence.

The school will record the absence under a particular category preset by the Department of Education (DE). This data is then available to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) for each pupil. DE also receives annually the overall data for each school.

By law, all children of compulsory school age (normally four to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. For most parents, this means registering their child at a school - though some choose to make other arrangements to provide a suitable, full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to do so, you risk being prosecuted.

Preventing your child from missing school: what you can do

You can help prevent your child skipping school by:

- making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- help them see education as a positive thing that creates life opportunities
- taking an interest in their education - ask about school work, attend school meetings and encourage them to get involved in school activities
- discussing any problems, they may have at school – inform their teacher or Principal about anything serious
- not letting them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work

Arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays will help to prevent disruption to your child's education and to the school. Under normal circumstances you should not expect the school to agree to your child going on holiday during term time.

Support on school attendance

There are many different issues which can affect school attendance.

Examples include problems with:



bullying



housing or care arrangements



transport to and from school



work and money

If your child starts missing school, there may be a problem you are not aware of. Ask your child first, then approach their teacher or form tutor.

Support from the school

Your child's school is the first place to go to discuss any attendance problems. The school should try to agree a plan with you to improve your child's attendance.

A small number of schools are working with the Education Authority (EA) to undertake the 'Primary Attendance Matters' programme which aims to show primary aged pupils the benefits of school and to reward them for good attendance.

*If your child's attendance gives the school reason for concern (the trigger point for this is normally when attendance **drops below 85 per cent**) they will refer your child to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in the EA in your region.*

Support from the Education Authority

The EA in your region can also help if you are struggling to ensure that your child goes to school.

Potential forms of support from the Education Authority include:

- home tuition for children with long term and recurring illnesses, so they do not fall too far behind
- support to help reduce the burden on children where families are in difficulty (for example, if a child is spending a lot of time caring for someone)
- working with families and schools to overcome bullying and other serious problems

The EWS in the EA is a specialist education support service which helps young people of a compulsory school age and their families to get the best out of the education system. The EWS can offer advice and support to help you and your child to have good attendance at school.

More advice and support can be found by going to:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/parents.htm>

