

# Whitechurch Old Schools Montessori



## Child Protection Policy

### Policy statement

Whitechurch Old Schools Montessori has developed this policy in line with current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and National Child Protection Guidelines 2011. It takes account of the provisions of each of the following pieces of legislation:

- Freedom of Information Act 1997
- The Education Act 1998,
- The Child Welfare Act 2000
- Children First- National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First)

### Aims

The purpose of this policy is:

- To provide information necessary for the protection of Children.
- To be aware of their obligations to convey any reasonable concern or suspicions of abuse to the relevant authority and the procedures for doing so.

### Procedures

All staff will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in 'Children First Guidelines' and the Department of Education's document 'Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures'. All staff members are expected to behave in a professional manner whereby all children are treated equally.

#### The Designated Liaison Person

- The Designated Liaison Person role is primarily to ensure that the concerns raised regarding the child are documented and referred to appropriate service
- The DLP will report the issue/discuss with the appropriate person at HSE Children and Family Services. Referral Forms are available on [www.hse.ie/go/childrenfirst](http://www.hse.ie/go/childrenfirst) website.
- The designated liaison person is Mrs Gedingka Fair and she should be informed of all concerns.

The staff have agreed that:

- All concerns/disclosures involving child welfare/protection issues will be reported in the first instance to DLP who will then follow the procedures as laid out below.
- Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making the report.
- Confidentiality – information regarding concerns/disclosures of abuse will only be given on a 'need to know' basis.

#### Recommended steps for Dealing with disclosure ('Children First')

- Listen carefully

- Allow time for the child to express them selves
- Reassure the child/person disclosing the information
- Clarify the information being conveyed without investigation
- Do not ask leading questions
- Record the information
- Report the information /concern
- Do not promise confidentiality or make promises which you cannot keep.
- The child should not be interviewed as this is carried out by trained designed social workers.
- Accurate records must be maintained

## **Recording Allegations of Abuse**

### Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse

The Protection for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to any person who reports a child protection concern 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of an Garda Síochána (DES Procedures 1:10)

### Qualified Privilege

People making a report to the DLP in good faith have 'qualified privilege' under common law. Reports made to Health Boards may be subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997. This act enables members of the public to obtain access to personal information relating to them which is in the possession of public bodies. However, the act also provides that public bodies may refuse access to information obtained by them in confidence (DES Procedures 1:11)

### Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types. These categories are defined in full in 'Children First' (Chapter 2).

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse


Please note that neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual, stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care.

## **References and Bibliography**

Childrens First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. (2011)  
Dept of Children and Youth Affairs. Government Publications

This Policy will be reviewed annually

Policy written 2013 – This is currently being reviewed

Signed  \_\_\_\_\_  
Date 22/11/2013



## **WHITECHURCH MONTESSORI**

### **Comments & Complaints Procedure**

A comments & complaints procedure exists in order to provide a better service.

A complaint may be about an individual's behaviour or a concern about an element of practise.

All complaints will be recorded and acted upon within two weeks of receipt of the complaint.

In the event of the parent having an issue either involving their individual child or the service as a whole they should, in the first instance, raise this with their child's carer. If the issue is not resolved, the Pre-School Manager should be consulted.

The parent and the leader should have a friend or partner present if required and an agreed written record of the discussion should be made.

Most complaints should be resolved informally or at this initial stage.

Every effort will be made to resolve any matter immediately and without prejudice. The complainant may complete a complaints form. Action will be taken within two weeks. A similar system is in place for comments which need to be acted upon, received by the Pre-School.