



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Safeguarding Children in Education:

Code of Conduct for Safe Practice Policy



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Safeguarding Children in Education: **Code of Conduct for Safe Practice Policy**

Introduction

The document provides a guide for adults working in schools (including staff, Governors, volunteers and visitors) about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both adults and students. **All staff at St. Columba's should read and adhere to the code of conduct at all times.** It refers to and complements other policies and guidance at St. Columba's including:

- School Child Protection Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- School Positive Handling Policy

This policy is based upon the attached DCSF document 'Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings', in which can be found useful examples of acceptable and unacceptable conduct, together with discussion of the issues raised.

All staff have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This code of conduct has been produced to help staff establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

All adults working in St. Columba's should know the name of the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator in the school, be familiar with local child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people. All new staff to St. Columba's will be offered basic awareness Child Protection training within two years of their appointment.

Designated Child Protection Coordinator: Mr. R A Dunne



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Deputy Child Protection Coordinator : Mrs. M Fyles

Basic Principles

- **The child's welfare is paramount (Children Act 1989)**
- **Adults working in St. Columba's are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.**
- **Adults working in St. Columba's must work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.**
- **Adults should discuss and/or take advice promptly from a senior member of staff about any incident which could give rise for concern. Any incidents should be handled promptly and sensitively.**
- **A record should be kept of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed, in accordance with school record keeping policy.**
- **Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.**
- **Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.**

All staff, volunteers and visitors to St. Columba's must:

- **Be familiar with and work in accordance with the policies at St. Columba's including in particular :**
 - **Child protection**
 - **Behaviour**
 - **Positive Handling**
 - **Internet Safety**
 - **Health and Safety**
 - **Use of Photography and Filming**
 - **Whistleblowing**



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

- Provide a good example and a positive role model to pupils both in and out of school
- Behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner. For example: not be sarcastic and not making remarks or 'jokes' to students of a personal, sexual, racist, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive nature.
- Not embarrass or humiliate pupils.
- Not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any pupil. For example : treating all students equally - never building 'special' relationships or conferring favour on particular pupils.
- Not giving or receiving (other than token) gifts unless arranged through the school. (See Financial Procedures).
- Ensure that relationships with pupils remain on a professional footing. For example : only touching pupils for professional reasons when this is necessary and appropriate for the student's wellbeing or safety (more guidance on this is set out in the DCSF Guidance for Safe practice and the school's Positive Handling Policy referred to above)
- Not behaving in a way that could lead a reasonable observer to question conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children.
- Not making arrangements to contact, communicate or meet with pupils outside work (this includes use of email, text and other messaging systems) except in the use of the school website.
- Not developing 'personal' or sexual relationships with pupils. Particular attention is drawn to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which creates a new criminal offence of abuse of a position of trust (when a person aged 18 or over is in a 'position of trust' with a person under 18 and engages in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child or causes or incites that child to engage in or watch sexual activity).

Confidentiality

Confidential information about a child or young person should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

know basis. In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities e.g Child Protection Co-ordinator.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Headteacher

This means that staff:

- **Are expected to treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner.**
- **If in any doubt about sharing information they hold, or which has been requested of them, should seek advice from a senior member of staff**
- **Need to be cautious when passing information to others about a child/young person.**

Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role which may be different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff at St. Columba's should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

This means that adults should wear clothing which:

- **Promotes a positive and professional image**
- **Is appropriate to their role**
- **Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative**
- **Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding**
- **Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans**
- **Is not considered to be discriminatory**

Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age - appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from a senior manager.

This means that adults should:

- **Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this**



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

action is described

- **Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent**
- **Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny**
- **Never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.**

Transporting Children

In certain situations e.g. out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport children. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.

Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

This means that adults should:

- **Plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance, responding sensitively and flexibly to disagreements**
- **Ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible**
- **Be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer**
- **Report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival in accordance with agreed procedures**
- **Ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety**

Educational Visits and After School Clubs

Staff should refer to the Local Authority Policy on Educational Visits (available in the Office, see Kirstie Carroll) for detailed guidance on



safeguarding during visits

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

This means that adults should:

- **Always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with the Head teacher**
- **Undertake a risk assessment**
- **Have parental consent to the activity**
- **Ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.**

Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis.

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty should be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, their parents/carers and the organisation must be negotiated, agreed and recorded. In addition, the views and/or emotional responses of children with special educational needs, regardless of



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

age and ability must be actively sought in regular reviews of these arrangements.

This means that adults should:

- **Adhere to the school's intimate care guidelines**
- **Make other staff aware of the task being undertaken**
- **Explain to the child what is happening**
- **Consult with colleagues where any variation from agreed procedure/care plan is necessary**
- **Record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with parents.**

Photography, Videos, Creative Arts and IT

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement.

Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. Particular regard needs to be given when they involve young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place.

Children who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming etc in the teaching environment.

Staff should remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Using images of children for publicity purposes will require the age - appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

It is recommended that when using a photograph the following guidance should be followed:

- **If the photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil**
- **If the pupil is named, avoid using their photograph**
- **Schools should establish whether the image will be retained for further use**
- **Images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.**

Under no circumstances should staff have their mobile phone on their desk or on display in the classroom. Staff need to recognize that this could lead to accusations against themselves regarding the filming/photographing of pupils or pupils using it to film/photograph an incident in the classroom

Social Networking sites eg Facebook, MySpace, MSN, should not be accessed on the school premises. Public comments on such networking sites that may be detrimental to the school will result in possible disciplinary procedures.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Each employer should have a clear and accessible whistleblowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

All adults working in education settings should know the name of the school's designated teacher for child protection, or the equivalent individual, and know and follow relevant child protection policy and procedures. All staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to their designated person for child protection.

Reference documents

- School Policies File
- LSCB Local Safeguarding Children procedures
- Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings DfES (IRSC) Feb 2005
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused DfES 2006

POLICY AGREED BY GOVERNORS ON

SIGNATURE OF CHAIR OF GOVERNORS.....

SIGNATURE OF HEADTEACHER.....

Date to Be Reviewed	Actual Date of Review	Signed HT or COG
October 2010		



St Columba's Catholic Primary School