

Belgrove School

Senior Boys

Clontarf

Dublin 3

Tel: (01)833 1852



Principal

Frankie Byrne

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Child Protection Policy Children First

1. The safety and welfare of our pupils is the primary concern of all in Belgrove Senior Boys' School.
2. The Board of Management has adopted as school policy the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures introduced by the Department of Education and Science, in relation to Child Protection and Welfare. These guidelines promote the welfare of children and, in turn are in line with the national guidelines "Children First" published by the Department of Health and Children.
3. "Children First" prioritises the protection and welfare of the child above any other concern. Consequently, if there is a matter of concern in relation to abuse of children, we are obliged to report this to the Northern Area Health Board. They will assess the case and provide the necessary support for the child concerned.
4. In "Children First", child abuse is categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.
5. Each school must delegate a Designated Liaison Officer (DLP) to whom school staff report concerns preferably a written report in relation to abuse. The DLP for this school (appointed in 2002) is the Deputy Principal, John Hartnett. The Deputy Designated Liaison Officer (DDLPO), (appointed in 2009) is the Principal, Frankie Byrne.
6. Procedures to be followed when a school employee becomes aware of child abuse:
 - (i) Person tells the Designated Liaison Officer. It is recommended that a written report be given to the D.L.O.
 - (ii) If the suspicion or claim of child abuse is judged to have substance, the D.L.O. notifies the Chairperson of the Board of Management that a report is being forwarded to the Department of Health.

- (iii) The D.L.O then notifies the Department of Health and, if criminal wrongdoing is involved, the Gardai.
- (iv) The D.L.O. notifies the parents of the child that a report is being sent to the Department of Health, unless it would not be in the interest of the child to do so.

7. As a rough rule of thumb, it is suggested that if the abuse is one of neglect or emotional abuse, the parents should be notified.

If the abuse is physical or sexual, it might be more prudent not to tell the parents.

Having received a report from a member of the school staff, the D.L.O. has three options:

- (a) send on the report to the Department of Health.
- (b) decide not to send on the report after consulting with social workers /Gardai
- (c) decide to monitor the situation.

If the D.L.O takes (b) or (c) course of action above, the school employee is entitled to by-pass the D.L.O. and send in a report himself/herself to the Department of Health.

8. Prior to formally sending in a report to the Department of Health, the D.L.O. should consult informally with the duty social worker in the area.
9. When talking informally about a suspected case of child abuse, it is recommended that the DLO gives no identifying details and to make it clear to the duty worker that, at this stage, an official referral is not being made, rather an informal consultation.
10. It is advised that the DLO records what advice was given on the phone by the duty social worker.
11. If the DLO does send on a report of abuse to the Department of Health, the following procedures will then be adopted:
- (a) Case will be assigned to a social worker
 - (b) A preliminary enquiring / screening process will begin.
 - (c) Initial assessment will result in one of a number of outcomes.
 - Case will be closed, if further proceeding is not warranted.
 - Family support will be offered (in case of neglect/ emotional abuse)
 - A child protection plan will be implemented (in case of more serious abuse)

12. The post of Child Care Manager is a new post established in 2000 to implement the new Child protection programme and he/she should be contacted if the DLO is dissatisfied with the progression of a case. The present Child Care Manager in our area Dublin (Area 7) is Colman Duggan.
13. A Record Book should be kept in the school to record all complaints/suspicions of abuse.
14. In the case of physical abuse, photographs should not be taken.
15. When forwarding an official report to the Department of Health, it is suggested that the child's school number might be used, rather than his actual name, to preserve confidentiality.
16. Bullying: If a case of bullying within the school is too serious for the school to handle, the Department of Health should be contacted.

Parents of both the victim and the bully should be notified that a report is being made.
17. High levels of absenteeism is regarded as 'neglect, and hence constitutes a form of abuse on the child.
18. Confidentiality is of extreme importance. All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should be shared only on a need to know basis in the interests of the child. Any record of child protection concerns/referrals will be kept in the Principal's office separate from the pupil's main records.
19. Allegations of Abuse against an Employee
 - Where an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee, a written statement of the allegation should be provided to the D.L.O. (Parents or guardians may make a statement on behalf of a child). The D.L.O. will inform the Chairman of the B.O.M. of the allegation whether or not the matter is being reported to the health board. The B.O.M. will have as its priority, the protection of the child but it will also be cognisant of the right of the employee to be treated fairly and sensitively, bearing in mind that school employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegation. The employee has the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry.

- Where an allegation arises two separate issues present themselves – the reporting procedures in relation to the allegation and the procedure for dealing with the employee. While the D.L.O. is responsible for the former issue, the Chairman of the B.O.M. is responsible for addressing the employment issue (procedures to be followed by the Chairman are outlined in Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, Chapter 4, Sections 3,4).

20. Vetting of Staff

- In the case of new appointments of permanent, temporary, substitute and ancillary staff, references will be sought from previous employers. Local Gardai will be contacted and asked to examine their records to vet all new short-listed applicants for positions in the school before an appointment is formally made.

21. Information for Teaching Staff

- All Teaching Staff have been supplied with a copy of Chapter 2 of the DES Child Protection Guidelines and Procedure, which details the responsibilities of all school personnel.
- Teachers have also been supplied with a copy of the following section of the “Children First” National Guidelines:

Chapter 3: Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Appendix 1: Signs and Symptoms of Abuse.

22. Stay Safe Programme

- The Stay Safe Child Abuse Prevention Programme is taught in this school as an integral element of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).
- The main lesson of the Stay Safe Programme for all children who find themselves in an unsafe situation is “Say No, Get Away. Tell an adult you trust. Keep telling until someone listens to you.

23. Support Agencies for families / teachers

(a) National Counselling Service

(1800 234110) (North Dublin Area) – funded by Dept. of Health.

(b) Edu - Care (Drumcondra)

(8570209) - Assistance and Support for Teachers.

(c) CARI - (Children at Risk)

(8306309) - Funded by Dept. of Health.

Provides crisis counselling (10-20 sessions)

(d) CAPP (Child Abuse Prevention Programme)

(6206347) Cherry Orchard Hospital

Provides training to staff and Boys.

Useful website address: www.pcsp.ie