

Child Protection Policy.

The Board of Management of Jesus and Mary College recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. In accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*, the Board of Management has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. 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.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is the Principal, Ms Kavanagh
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is the Deputy Principal, Mr Dooley.
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Jesus and Mary College will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will

- Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations
- Fully cooperate 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 and protect all staff 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 school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

- 5 The school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection include the Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying Policy, School Attendance Policy, Supervision of Students, One to One meetings, Sporting activities, School Outings/Tours, Work Placements etc.

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above and that our Professional Behaviour for School Personnel comprises part of this policy.

- 6 This Policy applies to all members of the school community and has been made available and is accessible to all.

Strategy

- All personnel are informed of the Child Protection Guidelines and our policy on Child Protection.
- All new staff members are vetted so that we may ensure the safety of our students.
- A copy of the Child Protection Guidelines is permanently available in the Staff room. Every member of staff will be e-mailed a copy of our policy at the beginning of every academic year.

- The Principal is the Designated Liaison Person for the purpose of this policy and this has been ratified by the BOM.
- The Deputy Principal has also been ratified as Deputy DLP in the absence of the Principal.
- All relevant staff will be provided with the opportunity to attend any in-service pertaining to Child Protection.
- All Board of Management members have and will be provided with a copy of the Guidelines.
- All parents will be provided with a copy of the Guidelines on Child Protection in addition to the Parent Handbook.

Professional Behaviour for School Personnel

It is our intention to ensure that all school personnel adhere to what constitutes good and safe practice in staff/student interactions. While it is impossible to cover all situations it is expected that all staff members will at all times exercise professional judgement. As teachers are in a position of trust, their behaviour when interacting with students must be above reproach at all times and the boundary between adult and child cannot be breached in any circumstances. Fundamentally staff student relationships must always be conducted in a manner which is respectful, professional and appropriate. It is to be remembered that responsibility for the welfare of children lies with the adults who work with these children and not with the children themselves.

Our ethos encourages and fosters a caring and friendly relationship with students but staff must always maintain an arms-length professional relationship and this is applicable to in-school and out- of-school situations. This applies not only to all teachers but also to other school personnel such as volunteers and non-teaching personnel who interact with students when carrying out their day to day roles.

Physical Boundaries

As a guiding principle, any physical contact which is likely to be misinterpreted by the student, parent or another person should be avoided. Everyone must respect the personal space and privacy of individuals. Clearly in an emergency situation and possibly, in other situations where a student is very distressed, for example bereavement, there may be need for physical contact but it should only take place when it is acceptable to all concerned.

Any relationship of a romantic or sexual nature is never permissible between any staff member and a student in the school. Such relationships breach the principles of trust and professionalism and are both unethical and unacceptable.

Child Protection Protocols

Physical Education

Changing rooms, toilet areas and shower areas require great sensitivity.

- Members of the P.E. Department will remain outside the changing rooms at the beginning and at the end of each P.E. class while students are getting ready for P.E. Staff will remain outside of these areas and will intervene only when required e.g.in emergency situations or for disciplinary or safety reasons. In addition, staff may enter changing rooms to access equipment.
- Members of the P.E. department assisting students in extracurricular activities will do so in the presence of more than one student at all times. If a student requires First Aid, it will be administered in the presence of others. However, no member of the Department will hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency even if another person is not present.

One to one meetings

There are occasions when confidential meetings must take place.

- As far as possible, staff should conduct such meetings in a room with visual access or with the door ajar.
- Doors to such a room should never be locked or entry or exit be prohibited.
- If a class teacher wishes to speak to a student in private this should be done on the corridor where other individuals may be passing.
- Teachers should never detain a student alone in a classroom or in an isolated part of the school.

Residential settings e.g. school tours/trips etc.

- On all trips involving overnight stays school authorities will ensure that there is a gender balance of school trip supervisors or all female supervisors.
- In overnight accommodation students will be assigned rooms by the tour leader who will ensure that there is a minimum of two students per room.
- Two school trip supervisors, at least one of which will be female, will check periodically on the students in their rooms.
- Teachers should knock on the door prior to entry except in cases of Health and Safety.
- Students will be provided with the contact details of a female member of staff.
- Students requiring medical care will be accompanied by a female teacher where possible.
- Insurance requirements will dictate the ratio of staff to students on such trips.
- All aspects of this policy apply to school trips.

Work Placements

All students attending work placements will be informed of our Child Protection Policy. Child protection pertaining to work experience will be explained to all Transition Year students in a class during their module on the World of Work.

Searches

Our policy on searches, which has been drawn up with due regard to child protection has been developed in consultation with our Board of Management, staff, parents and students.