

DOMINICAN COLLEGE



Safeguarding and Child Protection A Guide for Parents

Introduction

In Dominican College, the Safeguarding and Protection of pupils in our care is paramount. We aim to create a safe, stable harmonious atmosphere within which the values of truth, freedom, trust and responsibility are honoured. The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy supports our work in creating an environment where we appreciate the fundamental dignity of each person and aim to promote respect for self, for others and the wider community. We endeavour to equip all our pupils with the self-confidence and skills, which will enable them to make informed and responsible choices in life. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them to learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the skills they need to keep themselves safe. We encourage parental support in promoting the ethos and aims of the school.

Key Principles of Safeguarding and Child Protection

- The child or young person's welfare is paramount.
- Every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and have proper care given to their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.
- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. All efforts should be made to work co-operatively with parents, unless doing so is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.
- An appropriate balance should be struck between the child's rights and parent's rights.

Policy Aims

The aims of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy of Dominican College are to ensure the care, welfare and safety of the pupils and to protect them from harm. Our full Safeguarding and Child Protection policy can viewed on our website or obtained from our school secretary. (90 370298)

Procedures:

In order to protect our pupils, we will adhere to the following procedures.

- All staff and volunteers will undergo a vetting procedure in order to maintain the highest standard of professional care towards our children.
- All staff will attend regular Safeguarding and Child Protection training.
- All teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers will have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse is suspected or a disclosure of abuse has been made.
- All parents and visitors to the school must report to Reception on arrival at the school.
- Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and will be responded to sensitively in our school. Our Anti-Bullying policy is available to view on our school website or from our school secretary.

Types of abuse

Child abuse may take a number of forms, including:

Neglect

This is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it is inadequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.

Physical Abuse

This is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms.

Sexual Abuse

This occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain, or the gratification of others.

Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Exploitation

This is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain.

Specific Types of Abuse

Grooming

Grooming of a child or young person is always abusive and/or exploitative. It is often associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) but can be a precursor to other forms of abuse. Grooming may occur face to face, online and/or through social media.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity.

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

This is threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse by a current or former intimate partner or family member.'

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls.

Forced Marriage

A Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties.

E-Safety/Internet Abuse

Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device.

Sexting

Sexting is the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has a statutory duty to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- Have a written child protection policy.
- Specifically address the prevention of bullying in school behaviour management policies.

The Safeguarding Team

Chair of Governors	Mrs Sheila Crea
Designated Governor for Child Protection	Mrs Mairead O’Neill
Principal	Mrs Lynda Catney
Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Miss Briege Chambers
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs Helen Robinson Mrs Christine Quinn

School Principal

The Principal has delegated responsibility for establishing and managing the safeguarding and child protection systems within the school.

Designated Teacher for Child Protection

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection has lead responsibility for the day to day implementation of Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures as set out in the policy.

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

The role of the Deputy Designated Teacher is to work co-operatively with the Designated Teacher in fulfilling his/her responsibilities.

External Agencies/Referrals

At Dominican College, we maintain strong links with external agencies to provide a relevant preventative curriculum. Our Safeguarding Team is trained by Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) and we liaise with the CPSSS, Social Services and PSNI when necessary. The Department of Education of Northern Ireland requires all those working in education to co-operate fully with social services and other agencies to protect children. It is therefore our duty to refer if there is a concern about any form of abuse.

Parents

We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to support all our pupils. Parents have the right to expect that our school is a secure and supportive environment. The primary responsibility for safeguarding and protection of children rests with parents, who should feel confident about reporting any concerns they have in relation to their child. Parents are required to inform the school if:

- the child has a medical condition or educational need or if there is any change in such needs.
- there are any Court Orders relating to the safety or wellbeing of a parent or child.
- there is any change in a child's circumstances for example - change of address, change of contact details, change of name or change of parental responsibility.

If you have any concerns about your child or another child's safety you should use the following procedure as outlined in the recent DENI document "Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – A guide for schools" (2017).

Procedures for parents reporting a potential child protection concern

I have a concern about my/a child's safety



I can talk to the Head of Year or Senior Teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Designated/ Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection or the Principal



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chair of Board of Governors



If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman
Tel: 0800 343 424



At any time, I can talk to the local Children's Services Gateway Team at 90 507000 or the PSNI Central Referral Unit at 028 9025 9299