

Child Protection

2023 - 2024



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In Methodist College pupils and staff are valued and respected as individuals and they are encouraged to develop their unique talents and abilities to their full potential. We seek to create a safe, caring, positive and supportive environment in which pupils have the right to be heard and see staff and volunteers as approachable people who will listen to their concerns about issues inside and outside school and take them seriously.

It is an unfortunate reality in the world today that some children and young people suffer some form of abuse. The Governors and staff of Methodist College recognise the contribution they can make to safeguarding children. They recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting pupils from harm.

Child abuse is completely unacceptable and may also be a criminal offence.



Safeguarding Team

Everyone in the College has a responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. However, within the school there are key personnel who are delegated with specific responsibility for child protection.

Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection

Rev Dr Janet Unsworth and Mr J Lowry

Principal

Mrs J Lendrum

Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Mrs A Kennedy

Deputy Designated Teachers

Mrs A Logan, Mrs H Parker, Dr F Quinn, Mrs M Cooney



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It may be very difficult for a child who has experienced a form of abuse to talk about the matter and so it is College policy that any member of staff will listen to a pupil who wishes to share a concern. Therefore, pupils are advised each year that they may seek help from any member of staff if they are experiencing personal difficulties.

Definition of Abuse

Child abuse occurs when *'a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger.'* (ACPC, 2005)



Types of Abuse

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact or non-penetrative acts such as touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse as can other children.



Types of Abuse

Emotional Abuse 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.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones - by a child's peers.



Types of Abuse

Exploitation 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. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

**All the above definitions are based on Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017)*

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated at Methodist College. The College's *Anti-Bullying Policy* sets out how bullying will be dealt with. To allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. Staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to deal appropriately with the bully.



Preventative Curriculum

The staff of the College support pupils who have been or are exposed to risk of harm in accordance with an agreed protection plan, enabling them to develop self-worth and resilience. The Designated Teacher ensures that appropriate support is being provided for the pupil. The staff help pupils in the school to develop skills in self-protection and develop confidence through:

- The content of the curriculum, particularly the Personal Development programme.
- The school ethos which provides a positive, supportive, and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting pupils in the school. The school ensures that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education and Welfare Service, Educational Psychologists, Police and School Nurse.



How a Parent/Guardian can raise a concern

If a parent/guardian has a child protection concern, they can follow the guide below:

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



I can contact the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs A Kennedy
Tel: 90 205 205



If I am still concerned, I can contact the Chair of the Board of Governors, Rev Dr Janet Unsworth
c/o 1 Malone Road, BT9 6BY



At any time, I can write or talk to a Social Worker
(9050 7000) or the PSNI (101)



Vetting of Staff and Volunteers

In the Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995) it is clear that *“the welfare of the child must be paramount consideration”* in all decisions concerning a child: this overrides all other considerations. Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states: *“In all actions concerning children whether undertaken by public, private social welfare institutions, courts, administrative authorities’ legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration.”*

All reasonable steps are taken to employ and engage suitable adults to work with our pupils. The College follows the guidance on pre-employment checking and safe recruitment practices provided by DENI. The Child Protection Policy and Anti-bullying Policy can be found on methody.org or a copy can be requested by phoning 02890 205205.

The views of parents and pupils are welcomed at any time and are normally directed to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Kennedy at 9020 5205.

