**VICTORIA COLLEGE BELFAST**

**(incorporating Richmond Lodge School)**

**Day Care Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

**1. Rationale:**

Victoria College Day Care aims to provide a broad balanced, coherent and challenging curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of the pupil in preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Staff have a vital role in ensuring the protection and well-being of the children entrusted to their care and they are well placed to identify distress and harm. Victoria College, therefore, is committed to practices which protect children from harm. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers associated with day care in Victoria College.

**2. Aims:**

The staff of the Day Care Setting:

1. accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.
2. recognise their pastoral responsibility to undertake whatever is necessary to safeguard and promote pupils’ welfare and safety.
3. endeavour to achieve this by:

(i) adopting child protection guidelines including a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers (reference Staff Induction handbook);

(ii) sharing information about child protection and good practice with pupils, parents, staff and volunteers;

(iii) sharing information about concerns with the agencies who “need to know” and involving parents and children appropriately;

(iv) following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers; and

(v) providing staff and volunteers with effective management through supervision, support and training.

Regular liaison will be maintained with staff of the Early Years Team, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Gateway Services.

The Designated Officer with specific responsibility for child protection is Mrs K Hrabovsky the Deputy Designated Officer is Mrs R Moffitt.

**3. Definitions:**

**Categories of Abuse:**

Members of staff should have knowledge of what constitutes abuse but it is not their responsibility to investigate the causes. Both diagnosis and investigation are the responsibility of the medical, social work and police services. However, concerns may result from staff member’s own observation or from a child’s self-report and it is important that what the child says is taken seriously and action taken straight away. Abuse must be stopped and preferably prevented. It is always wrong and it is never the child’s fault.

The child may be abused by a parent, sibling, or another relative, a member of staff, a fellow pupil, a carer, an acquaintance or a stranger, whether an adult or a young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or a failure to provide proper care or both. Particularly in the school context, bullying is a form of abuse which should be dealt with as seriously as any other form of abuse. In its persistent form it should lead to the invoking of child protection procedures.

**Emotional Abuse -** Emotional ill treatment or rejection has adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a child and can be caused by persistent emotional deprivation or abuse. Emotional abuse hurts children very deeply. Children need love, reassurance and praise from parents and carers so that they feel confident and happy.

**Neglect -** The persistent or severe neglect of the child (e.g. by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child’s health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. Children who are neglected usually show signs of being unhappy in some way. They appear withdrawn or unusually aggressive, or they may have lingering health problems or difficulties at school.

**Physical Abuse -** Physical injury to a child, whether the injury was deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented. Physical abuse can cause injuries including bruising, burns, fractures, internal injuries and brain damage. In the most extreme cases, physical abuse can cause death.

**Sexual Abuse -** The sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent occurs when an adult or another young person forces the child to take part in sexual activity, using the child to satisfy his or her own sexual desires. This can involve sexual intercourse, fondling, masturbation, oral sex and intercourse or exposing children to pornographic videos, books, magazines, or material. Sexual abuse can have very damaging and long lasting effects.

With the rapidly changing E-world there is the potential for a child to be exposed to abuse in a variety of contexts. Where this occurs the child protection procedures will be invoked.

**Female genital mutilation** - Female genital mutilation (commonly referred to as FGM) is a form of child abuse that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. The practice is common in many cultures, with the largest number of reported cases occurring in African countries such as Egypt, Somalia and Sierra Leone. However, FGM has also been reported in up to 42 countries, including Pakistan, Russia, Thailand and Malaysia.

Some of the signs that a girl might be at risk of FGM include:

* Telling friends about FGM
* Confiding that she is going to have a ‘special procedure’ or is attending a special occasion to ‘become a woman’
* Talking about an upcoming long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
* Approaching a teacher to discuss her concerns if she is aware of, or suspects she is at immediate risk

Some signs and indicators to suggest a girl has been through a female genital mutilation procedure include the following:

* Difficulty walking
* Looking uncomfortable while sitting down
* Taking a long time in the toilet
* Significant changes in behaviour, such as becoming withdraw.

**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 (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Possible Signs of Abuse:**

1. Abnormality or change in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development.
2. Bruising.
3. Physical neglect.
4. Attention seeking behaviour or excessive dependence.
5. Inappropriate sexual behaviour or precocity.
6. Inappropriate distress.

It should be noted that the above symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement or other disruptions in family circumstances, drug, alcohol or solvent abuse. Alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described.

If these signs are noted and are of concern, it is the role of the staff member or volunteer who suspects that a child has been, or is at risk of being physically or sexually abused or neglected to bring this to the attention of the Designated Officer (Mrs Kirsty Hrabovsky or Mrs Rachel Moffitt). In preparing the information the staff member or volunteer should not unduly probe the child’s situation but rather listen and observe explaining that they have a responsibility to bring it to the attention of senior colleagues and child protection agencies. After the observation or disclosure has occurred the staff member or volunteer should record an account of what has occurred, on the same day.

**Code of Conduct for Child Protection**

The Code of Conduct for Child Protection and Safeguarding is based on three simple principles:

1. Observe
2. Record
3. Report

**4. Procedures:**

**Safeguarding**

The Day Care setting is accessible via the main reception door and this entry

is manually operated by the School Secretary. All visitors must sign in at

reception and wear an identity badge. CCTV is not in operation

across the Day Care setting.

**Awareness in Child Protection**

All Day Care staff are trained in child protection awareness, the implementation of procedures and will be alert to the signs of possible abuse and aware of the procedures to be followed.

Prevention is the preferred approach and the Day Care staff will take steps to reduce any potential for abuse to occur. For example, any situations which involve one-to-one contact between an adult and a child will be managed and monitored so that they take place in close proximity to available supervision and assistance. This could involve supporting a child one to one with toileting or supporting with a special educational needs programme.

**Disclosure**

1. Approach the child with tact and understanding avoiding asking leading questions or imposing adult assumption, such as “did they do XXX to you”? Rather seek clarification such as “tell me what has happened?”

2. Make it clear from the outset that no promise of confidentiality can be given. It will be necessary to pass on the information to the designated teacher and in turn to other professionals whose responsibility it is to investigate allegations of child abuse.

3. If the child is recounting information freely do not interrupt.

4. Wherever possible have another person present to take note of the following: time, date, place, persons present, discussions and comments made both by the teacher and the pupil. Describe in detail signs of physical injury observed but do not remove clothing. Any indication of distress should also be noted.

5. Write up these comments as soon as possible afterwards, preferably quoting the words actually used. The written up notes should be agreed as an accurate record of the discussion by both staff members if two were present.

6. Remember that the notes of discussion with the child may be used insubsequent court proceedings. Report objectively and accurately.

7. Do not carry out an investigation into the case of suspected abuse or make extensive inquiries of the child’s family, but where comments are subsequently made by a parent, carer or another person about where injury has occurred these comments should be recorded.

8. Report the information to the Designated Officer (Day Care Manager-Mrs R Moffitt) immediately. If a referral is required, the Designated Officer (Day Care Manager-Mrs R Moffitt) will inform the Gateway Services and Early Years Team immediately.

As exceptions to the above, if the incident involves

(i) the Designated Teacher or Day Care Manager, the matter should be reported directly to the Principal of the College;

(ii) the Principal, the matter should be reported directly to the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

If abuse is suspected or an allegation has been made, the Chairman of the

Board of Governors (or such Governor who may be nominated by the Board

of Governors to act in his/her absence) will be informed and the Designated

Governor and the Designated Teacher will refer the case to the Gateway

Services and inform the Early Years Team.

**What Happens when Child Abuse is Reported?**

Immediately a referral is received by the Gateway Services it will be communicated by telephone to the other agencies. A social worker will consult the child’s doctor or other people with relevant knowledge of the child and her family. There is consultation between the organisations to achieve an agreed process for inquiries. The Joint Protocol aims to make the process as sensitive and as unobtrusive as possible. The over-riding aim is to do what is in the child’s best interest. It is important to remember that checking out concerns does not necessarily lead to an investigation. If abuse is disclosed or suspected, the Designated Officer will inform the parents/ carer unless the parent/ carer is the subject of the allegation.

**6. Review and Evaluation:**

The policy will be reviewed at least once a year by the Board of Governors. The policy will be kept under review by senior members of staff who will keep Governors informed of any difficulties that may arise.

**What do I do if I have a Child**

**Protection issue?**

A concern is raised by/

to a member of staff.

The member of staff informs the Designated Officer Mrs K Hrabovsky or in her absence the Deputy Day Care Manager/ Deputy Designated Officer (Mrs R Moffitt).

The Day Care Manager or Deputy Day Care Manager decides if a referral is appropriate.

BHSSCT Early Years Team are informed

(028 95042811).

The Gateway Team are contacted

and the Designated or Deputy

Designated Officer completes a

UNOCINI and refers via

the Gateway Team (028 9050 7000).

Parent/Carer informed of the

referral, unless the Parent/ Carer

is the subject of the allegation.

Designated or Deputy Designated Officer confirms within 24 hours that the referral has been received.

The Designated Officer and Day Care Manager have specific responsibility for child protection and the Deputy Designated Officers are Deputy Managers. Regular liaison will be maintained with staff of the Early Years Team, Social Services at Belfast Health and Social Services Trust who have designated staff available for consultation. The Day Care setting will be inspected on an annual basis by the BHSSC Trust Early Years Team. The setting’s link Social Worker is Kevina McDonald.

**VICTORIA DAY CARE BELFAST**

**Child Protection Policy**

I confirm that I have received and read Victoria College Day Care’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

I confirm that I have been made aware of how to raise a Child Protection issue to the Day Care setting.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of parent/ carer:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Block Capitals)

**Child’s Name:**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Block Capitals)

**Year group:**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_