

# TERENURE COLLEGE JUNIOR SCHOOL



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

All pupils in Terenure College Junior School have a right to be educated in a secure and safe environment. The Carmelite Order in Ireland embraces this right and is dedicated to promoting and ensuring the protection of children and young people. This Child Protection Policy has been developed for Terenure College Junior School, based upon the following guidelines:

- *Our Duty to Care – The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People* – Department of Health & Children, 2002
- *Child Protection - Guidelines and Procedures* – Department of Education and Science, 2001
- *Interim Child Protection Policy* – Irish Province of Carmelites, 2006

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Definitions

#### 2.1.1. Child Abuse

Child abuse may be suspected, witnessed or disclosed. It is complicated and can take different forms, but it usually consists of one or more of the following:

Neglect	Where a child's needs for food, warmth, shelter, nurturance and safety are not provided, to the extent that the child suffers significant harm
Emotional Abuse	Where a child's needs for affection, approval and security are not being met and have not been met for some time by parents or carers
Physical Abuse	Where a child is assaulted or injured in some way that is deliberate
Sexual Abuse	Where a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult

#### 2.1.2. Worker

For the purposes of this policy, a *worker* is anyone who is engaged in work or voluntary activity with children or young people, whether as a paid employee or as a volunteer. This includes the staff of Terenure College Junior School and all adults who are involved in providing voluntary services, such as coaching and supervision, through the school.

#### 2.1.3. Child

The terms *child* and *children* are used throughout this policy. Although these terms are defined differently in various pieces of legislation, the definition of a child under both the *Child Care Act, 1991* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, is a person under 18 year of age. This definition has been adopted in this policy.

## 2.2. Roles and Responsibilities

For the purposes of the implementation and maintenance of this policy, the following roles and responsibilities have been defined:

Chairperson	<p>For the purposes of this policy, the Prior of Terenure College will perform duties equivalent to those of a Chairperson of a Board of Management of a National Primary School.</p> <p>As the employer of the staff of Terenure College Junior School, he will be responsible for employment-related issues.</p>
Designated Liaison Person	<p>Ms. Gwen McDonnell of Terenure College Junior School will be the <i>Designated Liaison Person</i>.</p> <p>The general responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being responsible for the implementation and maintenance of this policy and will ensure that the policy is reviewed annually, and revised as appropriate;</li> <li>• Acting as a resource for any person involved in the Junior School (worker, child, parent or guardian) who has concerns about any aspect of child protection;</li> <li>• Acting as a liaison person with the statutory agencies responsible for child issues;</li> </ul> <p>The specific responsibilities of the Designated Person, in relation to dealing with child protection concerns and complaints, are covered in Section 5 of this document.</p>
Deputy Liaison Person	<p>A lay member of staff from the Junior School will be appointed annually, by the Prior of Terenure College, to act as the <i>Deputy Designated Person</i>.</p> <p>The responsibilities of the Deputy Liaison Person will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the Designated Liaison Person in the implementation and maintenance of this policy;</li> <li>• Dealing with child protection issues in the absence of the Designated Liaison Person.</li> </ul>

## 3. Policy Statement

We in Terenure College Junior School value and encourage the participation of children and young people in all school activities that enhance their educational, spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. We recognise the dignity and rights of all children and are committed to ensuring their protection and support.

In keeping with this, we will do all in our power to create safe environments for children and young people, in order to ensure their protection and to enable their full participation in the life of Terenure College.

## 4. Ensuring Effective Child Protection

The following management principles and practices have been adopted to help ensure effective child protection in Terenure College Junior School.

### 4.1. Record-Keeping

Written records of the following will be kept in the Junior School:

Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student records, including medical information;</li> <li>• Signed copies of codes of behaviour and discipline;</li> <li>• Contact details for parents and guardians</li> </ul>
Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff records for all members of staff, including proof of identity, a Declaration Form, references and certification of clearance by the Garda Síochána;</li> <li>• Volunteer records for all volunteers, including proof of identity, a Declaration Form and at least two references;</li> <li>• Induction training and annual update training records;</li> <li>• Signed copies of codes of behaviour;</li> </ul>
Activities and Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records of organisers and supervisors of activities and events;</li> <li>• A Parental Consent Form will be completed and signed by a parent or guardian of each child involved in activities and events;</li> </ul>
Incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Incident Report Form will be completed and signed by a worker, in the event of any incident relating to a child;</li> </ul>
Child Protection Concerns and Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed records will be maintained and secured in relation to all concerns and complaints regarding child protection.</li> </ul>

### 4.2. Recruitment

The following recruitment principles will apply:

- Job descriptions will be maintained for all roles, including voluntary roles. These will identify minimum levels of qualification and skills, along with desirable personal qualities;
- All vacancies will be openly available and will be advertised as widely as possible;
- Application forms will be used for recruitment;
- Applications will include the following, which will be retained on file in the Junior School:
  - Proof of identity (e.g. a copy of a long birth certificate, driving licence or passport).
  - A signed Declaration Form (See Appendix 1);
  - A written reference from two referees who can attest to the suitability of the applicant for working with children and young people (See Appendix 2).
- Information on application forms will be verified and cross-checked, as appropriate.

### **4.3. Training**

The following training principles will apply:

- Appropriate induction training will be provided for all workers;
- In addition to the induction training, each worker will receive an appropriate update on an annual basis;
- Records of induction training and annual updates will be maintained in the Junior School;
- Where appropriate, successful completion of a probationary period of employment will be a pre-requisite to an employee's appointment to a full-time position in the Junior School;

### **4.4. Supervision**

All workers and children will be appropriately supervised to ensure that the principles of this policy are applied properly and consistently. Appropriate supervision will also help to ensure that issues of concern are dealt with promptly, as they arise.

#### **4.4.1. Supervision of Workers**

In addition to ensuring appropriate recruitment and training of workers, the Junior School recognises the need to provide appropriate supervision of workers. As such, the following principles will apply:

- An end of year review will be conducted with each member of staff of the Junior school;
- Standard operating procedures will be reviewed at least once per school year and revised as appropriate;
- The role of volunteers will be reviewed at least once per calendar year;

#### **4.4.1. Supervision of Children**

The Junior School recognises the need to provide appropriate supervision of children when they are under its care. As such, the following principles will apply:

- An appropriate ratio will be maintained between the number of workers and the number children who are under their supervision. These ratios will be governed by the following:
  - The nature of the activity or event;
  - The age and experience of the children being supervised;
  - The role and experience of the worker(s);
  - Particular requirements of the Designated Liaison Person;
- Specific requirements for supervision of activities and events are included below (Paragraph 4.6.3).

## **4.5. Codes of Behaviour**

In line with the Terenure College Junior School Policy Statement (See Section 3), codes of behaviour and discipline for all involved in the Junior School community have been formulated. The respective codes ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the values and educational philosophy of the Junior School. Also, by having written codes in place, the Junior School is adhering to the requirements set by the Department of Education and Science.

Clear objectives are included in the codes which will ensure that:

- Teaching and learning can take place without disruption;
- Parents and pupils be aware of the standards of behaviour to be observed by each pupil attending the Junior School;
- All staff and volunteers will have guidelines on what is expected, and what is not accepted, with respect to their behaviour;
- The principles of natural justice will always apply. The Junior School will have regard for any medical or other reason which may affect a pupil's behaviour.

### **4.5.1. Code of Behaviour for Workers**

Every worker who is associated with the Junior School will be required to read, understand and sign a copy of the *Code of Behaviour for Workers*, a copy of which will be retained on file in the Junior School. (See Appendix 3)

### **4.5.2. Code of Behaviour and Discipline for Children**

Students of the Junior School are expected to be kind, courteous, trustworthy and respectful to each other, to all members of the Junior School and College community, and to all those with whom they come in contact.

Every student of the Junior School will be required to read, understand and return a signed copy of the *Code of Behaviour and Discipline for Children* at the commencement of their schooling in Terenure College Junior School. This will be retained on file in the Junior School. All workers will be expected to be fully conversant with this code and its application.

## **4.6. Activities, Outings and Overnights from Home**

### **4.6.1. Information for Parents**

Appropriate information will be provided to parents and guardians in advance of Junior School activities and events.

### **4.6.2. Parental Consent**

A signed parental consent form must be submitted to the Junior School for each child, involved in activities.

**4.6.3. Supervision**

Appropriate supervision will be provided for children who are under the care of the Junior School while they are involved in activities, events or overnights from home. The following principles will apply:

- A single worker must bear overall responsibility for each activity or event. This worker may be supported by other workers, as appropriate;
- The worker who is designated as being responsible for an activity, event, or overnight from home must be satisfied that he/she can provide adequate supervision, with the support that is available from other workers. In the event that he/she is not satisfied, the activity or event should not proceed and the Designated Liaison Person should be informed.
- In the case of an overnight from home, where more than one worker is supervising a group of children, overall responsibility may be passed from one worker to another, as appropriate.

**4.6.4. Health and Safety**

The Junior School wishes to ensure the health and safety of children who are under its care while participating in activities, events and overnights from home. The following principles will apply:

- Contact details will be maintained for parents and guardians. These will be available to supervising workers, as appropriate;
- Relevant health issues of children under supervision will be made available to supervising workers, as appropriate;
- Contact details of supervising workers will be made available to parents and guardians, as appropriate;
- The worker who is designated as being responsible for an activity, event or overnight from home will be responsible for the health and safety of the children under his/her care and will be responsible for ensuring that any issues are recorded and submitted to the Designated Liaison Person.

**4.6.5. Insurance**

The Junior School will ensure that appropriate insurance is maintained to cover children while engaged in events, activities and overnights from home. This will include the following:

- Employer's liability insurance;
- Public liability insurance;
- Professional indemnity insurance of professionals, as appropriate;

#### **4.7. Programmes to Support Children's Awareness**

The following programmes, which are conducted in the Junior School, support children's awareness of relevant Child Protection issues:

- The Stay Safe programme
- The Alive O programme
- An Anti-Bullying workshop
- The RSE programme
- Circle Time

#### **4.8. Related Policies**

This document should be read in conjunction with the following, related, Junior School policies:

- The Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Internet Usage Policy
- The Health and Safety Policy
- Junior School Code of Discipline
- Junior School Regulations
- Classroom Rules

## **5. Dealing with Child Protection Concerns and Complaints**

### **5.1. Principles**

The following principles will apply in relation to child protection concerns and complaints in Terenure College Junior School:

#### **5.1.1. Duty to Report Child Abuse**

A worker who knows or suspects that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused, has a duty to convey this concern to the Designated Liaison Person.

#### **5.1.2. Confidentiality**

Information regarding concerns of possible child abuse will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, in the interests of the child. Giving information to those who need to have that information, for the protection of a child who may have been abused, is not a breach of confidentiality.

#### **5.1.3. Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse**

There is considerable legal protection for those who report child abuse, provided that they do so “reasonably and in good faith”. Those reporting a child’s disclosure are not regarded as making an allegation, but simply carrying out their duty in good faith. They are not accusing or bringing a charge.

### **5.2. Responsibilities**

#### **5.2.1. Responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person**

The responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person, in relation to dealing with child protection concerns and complaints, are as follows:

- To receive concerns and complaints regarding child abuse;
- To refrain from investigating any concern or complaint regarding child protection;
- To report concerns and complaints to statutory authorities, as per the following official guidelines:
  - *Our Duty to Care – The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People* [Department of Health & Children, 2002]
  - *Child Protection – Guidelines and Procedures* [Department of Education & Science, 2001]
- To maintain ongoing contact with statutory authorities;
- To ensure that a complete written record is kept in relation to all concerns and complaints, including subsequent action taken, all communication with statutory authorities and the outcome of the referral;
- To inform parents or guardians that a report has been made, unless doing so places the child at further risk. A decision not to inform parents or guardians should be briefly recorded, together with the reason for not doing so;

### **5.2.2. Responsibilities of Workers**

The responsibilities of workers, in response to a disclosure by a child of an alleged incidence of child abuse, are as follows:

- To advise the child that the matter will be handled sensitively and professionally and that other adults may be informed to ensure that the child's welfare is protected;
- To refrain from investigating the matter;
- To record all the information whether observed or reported
- To report the disclosure to the Designated Liaison Person

### **5.2.3 Responsibilities of Terenure College**

Terenure College recognises that it has two duties of care. The primary duty is the protection, safety and welfare of the children attending Terenure College Junior School. Terenure College as an employer, also has duties and responsibilities towards its employees.

- As an employer, Terenure College will seek legal advice if an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee;
- Terenure College will adhere to the protocol outlined in 'Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, Department of Education and Science, 2001 under Chapter 4: "Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse by School Employees", to authorise any actions required to protect the children in its care.
- Terenure College notes that school employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations. Any allegation should be dealt with sensitively. The employee should be treated fairly which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry. Terenure College accepts that the principles of natural justice and fair procedures must be adhered to.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

### Sample Declaration Form

<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	
<b>DECLARATION FORM</b>	
<b>Surname:</b> _____	<b>Forename:</b> _____
<b>Date of Birth:</b> _____	<b>Place of Birth:</b> _____
<b>Previous Names:</b> _____	
<b>Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order? Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/></b>	
<b>If Yes, please state the nature and date(s) of the offences:</b>	
<b>Nature of Offence</b>	<b>Date of Offence:</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
<b>Signed:</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> _____

## Appendix 2      Sample Volunteer Reference Form

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**VOLUNTEER REFERENCE FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_ has expressed an interest in providing voluntary services to Terenure College Junior School and has given your name as a referee.

This role involves substantial access to children and as an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason to be concerned about this applicant's being in contact with children or young people.

**Have you any such concerns?**      **Yes:**     **No:**

If you have answered Yes, we will contact you in confidence.

If you are happy to complete this reference, all information contained on the form will remain confidential. We would appreciate your being extremely candid in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

In what capacity have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

What attributes does this person have, which you believe would make him/her a suitable volunteer?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe his/her personality?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

### Appendix 3 Code of Behaviour for Workers

- It is not appropriate practice to be alone with a child or young person. Should circumstances arise where this is unavoidable another responsible adult must be informed and a diary note recorded noting the reasons for the meeting. In a one-to-one situation, make sure the door is open, and the meeting takes place in a building with other people present.
- Treat all children and young people with equal respect – favouritism of any kind is unacceptable.
- Be cognizant at all times of the imbalance of power inherent in adult-child relationships.
- Do not engage in or tolerate any behaviour that could be construed as bullying. Give firm guidelines on inappropriate behaviour. Children should be encouraged to report to staff or workers cases of bullying.
- Do not spend a disproportionate amount of time with any particular child or group of children.
- Do not give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people. Do not use alcohol, tobacco or drugs when working with or supervising children or young people.
- Use only age-appropriate language, media products, and activities when working with children and young people.
- Respect the physical integrity of children and young people at all times.
- Workers should never physically punish or be in any way abusive to children or young people. If you physically restrain a child for any reason, be aware that it could be misinterpreted as assault. This should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child (for example, where a child is distressed)
- Respect the privacy of children and young people at all times.
- Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when children and young people are in locations such as changing areas, swimming pools, showers, toilets. Do not take photographs of children or young people while they are in such areas.
- Do not do things of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do for themselves. This includes anything that can be misconstrued.
- It is not recommended that workers give lifts in their cars to a child or young person for any journey without having (i) their own child with them, or (ii) a minimum of 2 other non related children who will exit at the same destination.
- Carry identification when on journeys or trips with children or young people.
- Do not encourage visits to, or conduct meetings in private homes or quarters. When the need for a visit to the home of a child or young person arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times.