



Annex to Child Protection Policy. COVID-19 changes to our Kirkistown Primary School Child Protection Policy

Response to COVID-19

There have been some changes within our setting in response to the outbreak and the uncertainty of Education Restart.

Despite the changes, Kirkistown Primary School's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same:

Children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DT / Principal in line with our established safeguarding procedure.

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements in school and following advice from government and local agencies.

Reporting arrangements remain unchanged

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

Kirkistown Primary School Safeguarding Team:

Designated Teacher: Mrs A Harbinson (Rec & P1 teacher)
Deputy Designated Teacher: Mr S Irwin (P6 & P7 teacher)
Principal: Mr R Graham

The school's approach ensures that there is almost always someone from the Safeguarding Team on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not the case, the Principal / DT will be contactable by mobile phone and via email.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise any of the Safeguarding Team immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. The following contacts may be used:

EA Child Protection Support Services (CPSS): 028 9598 5590
Gateway Services for Children's Social Work: 0300 100 0300

Identifying vulnerability

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/new-vulnerable-children-guidance-published-schools-and-parents>

During lockdown many families were assisted by the school or local community and this will continue for as long as required.

Staff will be aware of increased risk

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the Safeguarding Team about any concerns.

Peer on peer abuse

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of a school closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between learners.

Risk online

Young people will be using the internet more during this period. The school may also use online approaches to deliver training or support. Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.

- The school continues to use Seesaw or Google Classroom to help ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place.
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been revisited the school's code of conduct in November 2020. Staff were reminded of the importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school.
- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online. Parents have been offered a range of details for other support networks including: Action Mental Health, Aware, Barnardos, Family Support NI, NSPCC.

School maintains a dedicated Safeguarding Team page on its website:

<http://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com/safeguarding-team.html> and also a page dedicated to staying safe online: <http://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com/staying-safe-online.html>

- Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre.

Allegations or concerns about staff

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or other volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

New staff or volunteers

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the Principal, Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher. They must read the school child protection policy, the positive behaviour policy and the staff code of conduct. New staff or volunteers will know who to contact if they are worried about a child.

New children at the school

Where children join our school from other settings we will require confirmation from their previous school regarding any special or additional educational needs and whether they have a Safeguarding File. Any relevant files must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our school and may necessitate a call made from the Designated Teacher, Principal or class teacher to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker. Safeguarding information about children placed in our school will be recorded and securely returned to the placing school on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.

The Designated Teacher, in conjunction with the Principal and Deputy Designated Teacher, will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded in our Child Protection notes.