

# NSPCC KEEPING SAFE POLICY



ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

MAGHERY

REVIEWED NOVEMBER 2023

## **Keeping Safe policy**

This document outlines our school's approach to teaching the Keeping Safe programme developed by NSPCC Northern Ireland and the Department of Education Northern Ireland.

This document should be used in conjunction with a range of other school policies and guidelines including:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care Overview
- PD&MU Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Digital Safeguarding Policies
  - E Safety Policy
  - Mobile Phone / Electronic Devices Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Relationships and Sexual Education Policy

### **Introduction:**

While we recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children, we realise that our school is well placed to provide dedicated support and care for our children and help keep them safe.

We recognise that in order for our children to learn best they must be free from stress and worry. We recognise the importance of the social and emotional wellbeing of our children and take a holistic approach to their development academically as well as socially, physically, and emotionally.

### **Vision and Values:**

Every pupil has a right to feel safe and secure and to be taught Keeping Safe messages in our school so that they recognise abuse and know how to seek help. Children will know who the 'Safeguarding Team' members are and how they are there to help. Photographs of these members of staff will be displayed around the school for children to see. Children will know they can speak to any member of staff and will be aware of good times to talk about worries they might have.

## **Rationale:**

In today's society for many people, there is still a real lack of knowledge about child abuse and about the long-term effects on children of such abuse. NSPCC estimates that 1 in 4 children will be affected by abuse and 1 in 20 affected by sexual abuse. Teachers and parents have reported that although they know it is vital to talk to their children about abuse they do not always feel they have the skills and ability to do so. Alarming, this can put children at risk because many children do not know what abuse is nor that it is wrong. Some children may have been tricked into believing that abusive behaviour is normal, and they may not know what to do or how to get help.

## **Aims:**

- **To recognise education as integral to preventing abuse in childhood.**
- **To adopt a whole school approach to delivering preventative education in our school.**
- **To provide parents and all school staff with the training and support necessary to deliver Keeping Safe messages.**

## **Objectives:**

Our school has three primary areas of responsibility with regard to the prevention of child abuse.

Our school should be a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment for children. All members of staff have an individual responsibility in this regard. Good working relations with external agencies are important in creating this protective environment for children.

Our school has a key role to play in the provision of key messages about keeping safe, as outlined in the PD&MU curriculum. As educators, teachers can deliver the key messages outlined in the Keeping Safe programme and give their pupils an opportunity to practice the specific skills involved.

All our staff are familiar with the Department of Education NI guidelines on responding appropriately to suspicions or disclosures of child abuse. Parents will be aware of the Child Protection Procedures in place, the schools safeguarding responsibilities and the action they are required to take if they have any safeguarding concerns. Information leaflets regarding access to the Child Protection Policy/procedures are available to view on our school website.

[www.stmaryspsmaghera.com](http://www.stmaryspsmaghera.com) .

## **Keeping Safe:**

The Keeping Safe programme provides an integrated, developmentally staged, and comprehensive approach to teaching children messages of how to keep safe.

This involves:

- A whole school approach to implementation
- Comprehensive training for all school staff
- Parent workshops/information sessions
- Keeping Safe lessons for children P1-P7

## **Whole School Approach:**

It is the view of our school that the Keeping Safe programme should not be taught in isolation, but rather as an integral part of the PD&MU curriculum in conjunction with the PATHS programme of Study and fully embedded in every aspect of school life.

## **Training:**

It is important that all school staff participate in comprehensive training before the introduction of the programme. Training provided by the CPSS and delivered by the Designated Teacher should also take place to ensure all staff are aware of the procedures and policies in place in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

## **Parent Education:**

Parental participation is an essential part of the Keeping Safe programme.

*Through the programme parents and guardians should have:*

1. An accurate knowledge of all forms of child abuse and understand what bullying is.
2. Been informed about their vital role in protecting children from child abuse and bullying.
3. The opportunity to enhance communication and thereby help children to confide in them. Children may only talk about serious matters if they have previously experienced a positive response to minor problems which they have encountered.
4. An understanding of the key messages of Keeping Safe so they can reinforce messages with their children.
5. Been supported to help their children in the following areas:
  - To understand their rights as a child. (Not to be harmed, to feel loved, looked after and secure etc)
  - To know what a health relationship is. (At home or with friends, offline and/or online)
  - To know that their body belongs to them. That some touches are inappropriate, and privates are private.
  - To talk about secrets that worry or confuse them.
  - To understand that people use bribes, threats, and manipulations to get what they want.
  - To know the dangers of being online and not to share personal information or photographs online without parental supervision.
  - To know the effects of bullying and how to deal with it online or offline.
  - Help their children identify who their safe adults are at home and at school.
  - Ensure their child knows how to get help and understands the importance of telling someone when they are worried about something that has happened to them or someone else.

## **The Keeping Safe Programme for Children:**

Most children will already have learned rules which are designed to protect them, such as road safety or fire safety. Personal safety should be a natural part of every child's education. The aim of the Keeping Safe programme is to reduce vulnerability to all forms of abuse and bullying. The programme develops children's ability to recognise, resist and report risky situations or abusive encounters. The Keeping Safe programme teaches children prevention, while preserving their sense of the world around them as a safe and secure place. This approach allows children to exercise control, to be assertive, and enables them to seek help for any problem they may encounter. The programme teaches strategies for dealing with various potentially dangerous situations and children are given the opportunity to practice these strategies in the classroom. Thus, the concepts are translated into skills which become part of the child's repertoire of self-protective behaviour.

### **Methodology:**

- In recognition of the fact that we all learn in different ways, a range of learning styles and teaching strategies have been employed related to active learning. These approaches will maximise opportunities for pupil input, role play, decision-making and problem-solving.
- Lessons will be conducted in a non-judgemental way with the teacher in the role of the facilitator, creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment. Empathetic relationships based on mutual respect will be developed to create a place where fears and concerns can be expressed openly without risk of ridicule.
- Our school will have Keeping Safe timetabled for at least three structured lessons per term. When lessons are being taught children will have agreed a set of rules to ensure confidentiality (a set of cue cards may be used).
- When teachers are teaching sensitive messages, they will have a 'Do not disturb' sign outside the classroom to protect privacy and highlight the sensitive nature of the issues being discussed.
- If a child wishes to talk freely about something which may alarm/upset other children, the teacher will agree a time to speak with the child after the lesson. This will allow the teacher to move on with the lesson while ensuring the child knows that the teacher will make time to talk to them about whatever is worrying them.
- The delivery of the lessons will ensure that children understand that they have a right to be happy and safe.
- They will learn what to tell, when to tell, who to tell and how to tell. They will practice this skill and become more confident and assertive.
- PD&MU will continue to be taught in line with these policy guidelines.

## **Managing the Content Delivered by External Agencies:**

Our school recognises the importance of ensuring that any external agencies used to support our delivery of Personal Safety must adhere to the values and ethos particular to our school.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

This school recognises and accepts the importance of monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the Keeping Safe curriculum. To this end we follow the procedures for self-evaluation as outlined in the DE document 'Together Towards Improvement' and 'Every School a Good School'.

The Designated Child Protection teacher has responsibility for Monitoring and Evaluation of the planners which will include planning and teaching of the Keeping Safe programme. They are also responsible for gathering evidence each term from each class ensuring that teaching and learning is taking place. Mrs Copeland may also wish to observe a Keeping Safe lesson or speak to the children to assess their learning. It is good practice to keep records of all of this for evaluation purposes.

## **Roles and responsibilities:**

Keeping Safe is a sensitive area of the curriculum and one which could raise anxiety among some staff and may lead to an increase in pupil disclosure and potential onward referrals. Our school recognises that this is a team approach. We work together as far as possible to share responsibility.

## **The role of the Principal is to:**

- Lead the planning for the programme ensuring it becomes part of the ethos of the school and practiced through example.
- Provide support to the Keeping Safe team and other school staff as the programme is implemented.
- Ensure time and resources are made available for planning, training, policy development and programme delivery.

## **The role of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection is to:**

- Ensure Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy includes Keeping Safe.
- Support staff with concerns about delivering Keeping Safe lessons.
- Pass on safeguarding / C.P. information to relevant teachers of children who may have experienced significant harm in the past /are on the Child Protection Register for a specific form of abuse.
- Reassure parents who have concerns about Keeping Safe.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are reported appropriately.
- Report to the Board of Governors as per procedure.

**The role of the Keeping Safe coordinator is to:**

- Ensure policy is developed and kept up to date.
- Attend any relevant training provided.
- Support teachers in the delivery of lessons and the sharing of practice.
- Monitor and evaluate Keeping Safe in planning.
- Evaluate the learning of Keeping Safe messages.

**Our Safeguarding Team is as follows:**

- Miss Robinson (Principal)
- Mrs Copeland (Designated Teacher)
- Miss Devlin (Deputy Designated Teacher)
- Mrs Mairead Laverty (Designated Governor)

**Policy Review**

This policy was reviewed in November 2023 and has been ratified by the Board of Governors at a meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

Miss Robinson (Principal)

Mr J Mc Kee (Chair of the Board of Governors)