

Child Protection Policy

St John's Business & Enterprise College is committed to the provision of a suitable environment for pupils to develop and mature, safe as far as possible, from psychological or physical harm.

- All members of staff have a duty to help protect children from abuse, or the risk of abuse.
- To protect pupils in its care and to comply with the requirements of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland, this school will refer any concerns about the well-being of its pupils to the local Social Services Department.
- This school has a Designated Teacher—Ms C. Doherty, who deals with child protection issues.
- Any member of staff who knows or suspects that a pupil is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, has a duty to convey his/her concern to the Designated Teacher.
- The school will then, as is required by law, inform Social Services. School staff do not carry out investigations, or decide whether children may have been abused. That is a matter for the specialist agencies.
- Every possible care will be taken to minimise the possibility of mistaken referrals but this cannot be guaranteed. No one has a choice when it comes to protecting children. The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Child protection issues are addressed through the curriculum as appropriate, especially in personal, social and health education.
- This school also seeks to ensure that bullying is identified and dealt with so that any harm caused by other pupils can be minimised. All pupils are encouraged to show respect for others. Parents are expected to help children to behave in non-violent and non-abusive ways.
- A trained counsellor is available in the school for pupils one day a week. Pupils may be referred by the Head of Key Stage, may make a self-referral or use the 'Drop In' facility at lunchtime.
- No matter how skilfully and sensitively pupils are managed, a small minority may occasionally engage in inappropriate behaviour which threatens their own safety and/or the safety of other pupils and staff. As part of our pastoral duty, staff must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the welfare of all pupils is safeguarded and that their safety is preserved.

In accordance with the Education (NI) Order 1998, a member of staff may use 'reasonable force', (i.e. the minimum force necessary) to prevent a pupil from physically harming himself or others or seriously damaging property [such force will be used only in a manner which attempts to preserve the dignity of all concerned]. The use of reasonable force will always depend on the circumstances of the case, and a copy of the school's detailed policy on 'Reasonable Force' is available, on request, from the school office.

If it is necessary to use physical force in such circumstances or if any pupil is injured accidentally, parents will be informed immediately.

Pupils will not be punished within school by any form of hitting, slapping, shaking, or other degrading treatment.

Any complaint about staff behaviour should be made to the Headteacher in the first instance and, subsequently, in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Governors if necessary. All those involved, both pupil and staff, are entitled to a fair hearing. Complaints which raise child protection issues will be reported by the school under local inter-agency procedures.