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## **STAY SAFE POLICY**

### **Rationale**

This policy is drawn up to provide for the teaching of personal safety skills to the children in St. Brigid's BNS. The rationale for this policy is to provide a framework for all parents, Board of Management and teaching staff as well as to provide an effective whole school approach to the provision of safety skills.

The policy is related to the overall spirit and ethos of the school and specifically to the school's desire that all pupils be safe in and out of school. It comes under the umbrella of the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum and has links with our RSE, Anti-Bullying and Child Protection Policies.

### **Aims**

The policy aims to encourage and promote:

- The creation of a safe and healthy environment.
- An environment that values and listens to our children.
- A whole school culture that encourages children to always be able to make disclosures
- An awareness by all staff of any warning signs or signals from children (e.g. physical signs of abuse, emotional or behavioural changes, distress)

### **Guidelines for the implementation of Stay Safe**

- The school will strive to ensure that all pupils will have access to a programme of safety skills education.
- The Stay Safe Programme will be implemented every other year during the second term in all classes. Teachers and parents work together to ensure that children learn the skills they need to keep safe. Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible. Special emphasis on key aspects of the programme

will be reinforced during “Friendship Week” which takes place during October.

- School policy is that all pupils participate in Stay Safe lessons. Parents who do not wish their child to partake must contact the school in writing to opt out of the programme.
- Our school’s Child Safeguarding Statement ensures that all staff members are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. Staff are also familiar with “Children First” document and the Department of Education and Skills guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosures of child abuse and bullying.
- Ongoing training will be provided for staff in the area of child protection and related areas.
- Any teacher may on grounds of personal difficulty opt not to teach the programme. In these cases alternative arrangements for supervision and teaching will be made.

### **Themes covered by the Stay Safe Programme**

#### **Topic 1 Feeling Safe and Unsafe**

- Giving children the opportunity to discuss feeling safe and unsafe. Validation of children's reactions to specific situations.
- Helping children to anticipate potentially dangerous situations.
- Giving children practical ways of dealing with unsafe situations.

#### **Topic 2 Bullying**

- Friendship and its importance to us.
- A safety strategy to deal with bullying - the rule “Say no, get away, tell”
- Teaching the unacceptability of bullying others and the role of the bystander

#### **Topic 3 Touches**

- The value and enjoyment of normal affection.
- Specifically in the appropriate cases the need for parents/carers to help in intimate care.
- The difference between acceptable and not acceptable touches.

- Safety strategies that include reinforcement of the safety rule of “Say no, get away, tell” as well as the importance of not keeping secrets regarding touches.

#### **Topic 4 Telling and Secrets**

- The difference between good and bad secrets.
- Identifying safe adults to tell.
- Appropriate practice in telling about "bad" secrets.

#### **Topic 5 Strangers**

- Clarifying who strangers are.
- Safety strategies to deal with strangers.
- Developing an understanding that most strangers need not be feared.
- Developing strategies in case of being lost, among strangers.

#### **Dealing with disclosures made by a child**

Staff are aware of and are familiar with the procedures for dealing with any pupil disclosures. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is the school Principal Nuala Cullen and Deputy DLP (DDL) is Deputy Principal Fionnuala Brennan.

#### **Success Criteria**

The policy will be judged in relation to how well it operates by reviewing:

- The response to any incidents.
- Evaluation in school of the children's levels of skills in discussion, assertiveness and levels of self-esteem.
- Feedback from staff and parents.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The BOM will review the operation of this policy and amend it as necessary.

The day to day operation of the policy and the responsibility for its implementation rests with the Principal and with the teaching staff of the school.

All staff have a duty of care at all time for the children in their immediate care and also for all of the children in the school.

‘**Stay Safe – A Parent’s Guide**’ is available to view [here](#) and from [www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie).

Parents should co-operate in the delivery of this policy and will be informed of its contents through our school website.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2021 and also at any other time when a problem with its implementation is identified.

Responsibility for review rests with the Board of Management as advised by the staff and Principal.

## **Ratification and Communication**

This policy will be available to all parents to view in school and on the school website.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management in November 2018

Timetable for Review: November 2021

Signed: *Msgr. Alex Stenson*  
Chairperson – Board of Management

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018