



# SOMERSET CRESCENT SCHOOL

## STUDENT WELLBEING: ABUSE POLICY

### **RATIONALE:**

The school must have guidelines to follow when there is evidence of abuse or allegations of abuse are made.

### **PURPOSE:**

- To ensure that correct procedures are followed when:
  - evidence of physical, emotional or sexual abuse is present
  - disclosures of abuse are made
- To ensure that the appropriate agencies are involved as necessary
- To ensure that there is a protocol to protect staff

### **GUIDELINES:**

- This policy will be presented to staff.
- Counseling services for staff will be available as required

#### **Suspected abuse:**

- Staff members will discuss any cases of suspected abuse with the DP/ Senior Management/ SENCO/ Team Leaders and Principal
- The class teacher will document any concerns briefly and factually

#### **The school acts when:**

- There is a disclosure of abuse
- There is evidence of abuse
- Documentation is available in the form of written reports or statements

#### **When a disclosure is made:**

1. It must be taken seriously and the student assured of the school's support.
2. The student should have privacy to talk about the issue. If more than one student is involved they must be interviewed separately.
3. Two teachers, including at least one senior management teacher, should be present.
4. Notes must be taken. Documentation must include the interviewer's words and actual words used by the student in their statement. Interviewers must not ask leading questions.
5. If the abuse is allegedly carried out by a student/s of the school during school hours, each one must be interviewed separately and sensitively
6. At the end of the interview process, the situation will be evaluated to determine the next action which may be a referral
7. The Principal or Deputy Principal will write a report from the facts, which will be kept on file and may be used as evidence if required.

#### **Referrals:**

- Parents/ caregivers will be informed or an agency involved, whichever is most appropriate
- All referrals will go through the Principal
- The school will respond to any requests made by Child, Youth and Family Service, the police or lawyers in the best interests of the child and/ or if court orders or other legal documentation is provided

### **CONCLUSION:**

Student Welfare is paramount. Teachers should be able to carry out procedures when there are concerns, and be backed by a policy which protects them from negative consequences.