



# St. Patrick's Junior School

TENNIS COURT LANE, SKERRIES, CO. DUBLIN.

K34 D799

Principal: Máire Ní Chróinín

Deputy Principal: Lynsey Dungan

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## Prevention of Assaults and Violence in St. Patrick's JNS, Skerries.

### Rationale

All members of our school community have the right to safety at work and at school. Consequences of violence at work for the individual can include physical harm, stress, emotional trauma, feelings of powerlessness and demotivation.

The Board of Management of the school is committed to ensuring that the right to safety at work and at school is protected insofar as possible by assessing the risk of assault or violence, by providing appropriate training and development in this area for staff, by taking action to reduce the possibility of assault or violence, by providing procedures to deal with assaults and violence when they happen and by defining procedures for reporting assaults and/or violence when this occurs. The remit of this school policy extends to the school premises only

### Risk Assessment

The risk of assault & violence to staff members is included in the school's overall health & safety risk assessment document. Health & Safety audits occur frequently and recommended actions are carried out as soon as practicable. All actions / safe workplace practices are monitored on an ongoing basis.

### A co-operative approach to prevention

All staff members share responsibility for following safe work instructions and safe workplace practices in order to reduce the risk of assault and/or violence at school for every member of staff.

### Safe Work Practices

All staff members are required to co-operate in the implementation of the following control measures. These measures are in place to ensure the security of all staff members and pupils.

- All staff members are required to sign in immediately they arrive on the premises in the morning and sign out as they are leaving the premises in the evening.
- Staff members will not normally be alone in the building during working hours. If in exceptional circumstances a staff member needs to be on the premises alone after working hours:
  - The principal must be informed in advance of this fact and of the reason why they need to be in the building alone.
  - The principal must be informed as soon as the staff member has left the building.
  - All exits except the main entrance should be locked while a single staff member is in the school alone.
  - The main entrance "mag locks" must be kept closed at this time.
  - Under no circumstances will a staff member hold a parent teacher meeting at a time when there are no other staff members present in the building.
- All meetings with parents/guardians and staff of outside agencies in the school are by appointment only through the office.



- Where a teacher requests it, another teacher (normally a senior member of staff) will attend meetings with him or her so that there are two staff members present at the meeting.
- All visitors to the school (as well as all parents outside normal drop off and collection times) must access the school via the front gate (normally kept locked during and after school time) and the school reception.
- At reception visitors must state their business and sign in before being admitted through the access door.
- All children being dropped off or collected outside normal times must be signed in and out.
- All staff members and children must close all gates and outside doors after them to prevent unauthorised access to non-public areas of the school.
- All students are taught to close outside doors after themselves and to close outside doors which are standing open.
- The principal will monitor adherence to these control measures on an ongoing basis.
- Periodic monitoring of these control measures will take place as part of normal health & safety audits.

### **Definition of Assault**

Where a person without lawful excuse, intentionally or recklessly

- Directly or indirectly applies force to or causes an impact on the body of another, or
- Causes another to believe on reasonable grounds that he or she is likely immediately to be subjected to any such force or impact, without the consent of the other  
(Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act, 1997, S2)

### **Dealing with assaults and violence.**

In the event of an assault:

- If possible, use de-escalation techniques to minimise the threat
- Remain as calm as possible
- If it is safe to do so, try to remove yourself and others from the immediate danger.
- Summon help but if this is not possible, try to place a barrier between you and your assailant.
- Where the assault is carried out by a young person or child, any measures used to protect yourself or those in your charges must be proportionate and reasonable to the situation and in the best interests of the child/young person.

Responding to an assault:

- In the immediate aftermath, a member of staff will be afforded appropriate time in a private quiet place to recover.
- Another staff member will stay with the staff member during this time.
- Where necessary the staff member should be accompanied home or to receive medical treatment.
- Details of the assault/incident should be recorded on the school incident sheet.
- The assault / incident should be formally reported to the principal and employer as soon as possible.
- Staff members will be reminded of the services of the Employee Assistance Service and encouraged to make contact with the service.

After an Assault:

- The assault should be immediately reported to the principal.



- All incidents should be recorded on the incident report form in the school's incident book.
- The matter should be reported to the Gardaí, where appropriate. This report would normally be made by the teacher who was assaulted.
- Where the assault is committed by a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian should be immediately instructed in writing not to make direct contact with the teacher/school pending full consideration of the matter by the Board. Subsequently the Board should correspond with the parent/ guardian stating:
  - that the Board considers the assault unacceptable
  - what action the Board intends to take
  - outlining what pre-conditions should be met before access to the school is restored.
- Where the assault/violence is carried out by a pupil, the school's response will be in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Repeatedly aggressive pupils should be referred, with the consent of parents, for psychological assessment in order to assess the pupils' social and emotional needs and to determine how these can be best met.
- A revised risk assessment will be carried out within 3 working days of an assault and appropriate action taken to prevent reoccurrence.
- Where a member of staff is off work for more than three days because of injuries sustained due to a workplace assault/violence this will be reported to the Health and Safety Authority (HSA).
- Where a member of staff incurs medical expenses or other costs as a result of assault/violence in school, an application may be made to the employer for recovery of the costs.
- In all cases of serious assault, advice should be sought from the staff member's union, if relevant, to ensure the protection of their rights.

### Training

- Appropriate training in this area will be sought for members of staff as and when necessary.

### Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Dept of Education and Skills Circular 40/1997

- Parent - Teacher Communication Policy
- Behaviour Policy / Discipline for Learning
- Health & Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policies

This policy ratified by the Board of Management on (date) 21/10/18

Signed: V. Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins

Very Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins,  
Chairperson, BoM.