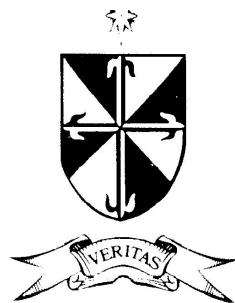


Dominican College

Sion Hill



Child Protection Policy

Contents

Section 1 – General

- 1.1** Scope of Policy
- 1.2** School Mission, Vision and Aims
- 1.3** Rationale
- 1.4** Goals

Section 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1** The Board of Management
- 2.2** The Staff
- 2.3** The Designated Liaison Person
- 2.4** Deputy Designated Liaison Person

Section 3 - Procedures for Dealing with Abuse

- 3.1** Suspicion of Abuse of a Student
- 3.2** Disclosure of Abuse
- 3.3** Designated Liaison Person
- 3.4** Written Records
- 3.5** Reporting

Section 4 - Where a School Employee may be Involved

- 4.1** General
- 4.2** The Procedure for Dealing with the Employee
 - 4.2.1** Designated Liaison Person
 - 4.2.2** Board of Management
 - 4.2.3** School Employees

Section 5 - Peer Abuse and Bullying

- 5.1** General
- 5.2** Peer abuse
- 5.3** Bullying
- 5.4** Sexualised Behaviour Between Children
 - 5.4.1** General
 - 5.4.2** Dealing with Sexualised Behaviour Between Children
- 5.5** Safety of Victim

Appendix

1. Reasonable Grounds for Concern:
2. Recognising child abuse.
3. Dealing with Disclosures from Students
4. Whether to Report the Matter
5. Child Protection Conference
6. Protocol Authorising Immediate Action.
7. Guidelines for the protection of teachers against allegations of improper behaviour towards students (ASTI)
8. Sexual abuse by children and young people
9. Standard Form for Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns

Section 1 – General

1.1 Scope of Policy:

This policy is a whole-school based policy and is to be followed by all members of staff. The policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Pastoral Care policy

1.2 School Mission, Vision and Aims:

School Philosophy and Mission Statement

Our principal objective is to provide for our students a broad and balanced education in all its aspects – intellectual, emotional, physical and cultural. This objective is achieved within a controlled but relaxed and happy environment.

Every member of this community – Board of Management, teachers, students, staff and parents – feels a sense of commitment and belonging

The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy. While educational excellence is promoted, it is the needs of the learner that direct the development of the school.

This school has an obligation to provide students with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well-being and protect them from harm.

1.3 Rationale:

This policy puts in place clear procedures, which school staff must follow where they suspect, or are alerted to, possible child abuse to ensure that such concerns are reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines

School personnel are especially well placed to observe changes in behaviour, failure to develop or outward signs of abuse in children

This policy is in compliance with the Child Protection Act. It is also fully consistent with the aims and goals of the school.

1.4 - Goals:

1. To provide students with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well being and protect them from harm.and in as far as is possible to create a safe environment for the students

2. To provide the school management and school staff with guidance in relation to recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse and with procedures for dealing immediately with such concerns.

3. All members of staff should be familiar with - the different categories of abuse
 - the signs associated with each- procedures for handling suspected cases
- 4 To designate a senior member of staff as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the school.

Section 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Board of Management

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to designate a senior member of staff as the Designated Liaison Person for the school.

2.2 The Staff

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to provide students with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well-being and protect them from harm.

The pastoral care system for each class, in particular, will be an important aspect of support for all students combined with Social, Personal & Health Education, Relationship and Sexuality Education.

“The role of teachers in the identification, investigation and management of child abuse is significant” (Kilkenny Incest Report).

The various aspects of the teachers role include:

- (a) Expressing concern about children who may be showing signs of abuse and reporting cases of alleged or suspected abuse
- (b) Raising awareness among students of their rights to personal health, welfare and safety
- (c) Monitoring children who are the subject of investigation for child abuse or who are considered at risk.

In situations where school personnel suspect that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, they should ensure that such concerns are reported to the Designated Liaison Person in accordance with the procedures outlined below. Any suspicion should be supported by an objective indication of abuse or neglect, or it may be deemed not to constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.

2.3 The Designated Liaison Person

The Designated Liaison Person will act as a liaison for the school in all dealings with the Health Service Executive (HSE), An Garda Síochána and other parties, in

connection with allegations of and/or concerns about child abuse and as a resource person to staff who may have child protection concerns.

The DLP should ensure that he/she is knowledgeable about child protection and undertakes any training considered necessary to keep himself/herself updated on new developments.

2.4 Deputy Designated Liaison Person

In a situation where the Designated Liaison Person might be unavailable when a concern arises, another member of staff should be formally nominated as the Deputy Designated Liaison Person.

Section 3 - Procedures for Dealing with Abuse

3.1 Suspicion of Abuse of a Student

Where a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he/she should, without delay, report the matter to the school DLP

In such situations school personnel should ensure that such concerns are to be reported in accordance with the procedures outlined.

Any suspicion should be supported by an objective indication of abuse or neglect, or it may be deemed not to constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.

3.2 Disclosure of Abuse:

1. When a disclosure is made the teacher's role is to listen in a non-judgmental, non-questioning way without revealing your own feelings or reactions. Do not give advice, just listen.
2. Reassure the child that she has done the right thing, that she was very courageous to do it and you'll do all you can to help. Affirm her as much as possible.
3. Always ensure that the child knows you believe what she is saying to be the truth.
4. Never promise to keep the secret: Always tell the child that you may not have the skills to deal with this problem and that it will be necessary for you to inform other professionals skilled in the area, and firstly the Designated Liaison Person. Reassure them that you will only tell those that it is necessary to tell and that you are there for them to support them.
5. Check/assess the safety of the child. If there is any immediate danger, discuss ways she can keep herself safe.

6. Arrange a time/tell her you will meet her the next day. Inform her of what your next step is to be. Keep her informed of what the next stage is. Keep contact within school hours.
7. Record the disclosure immediately once the child has left. Include the following:
 - a) the date, day, time.
 - b) Describe exactly what happened during the disclosure, quote the child exactly and write down the behaviour without interpreting or judging. The records must be totally objective. Always use initials of child in written records.
 - c) When reporting to the Designated Liaison Person - give the written record to him/her..
8. Report the disclosure to the Designated Liaison Person (see below)

3.3 Designated Liaison Person

The Designated Liaison Person will keep the records in a locked filing cabinet If the DLP is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation he/she should report the matter to the relevant HSE immediately. The DLP should seek advice from the Duty Social Worker in the HSE if the DLP is not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, (appendix) Where the DLP decides that the concerns of a member of staff should not be reported to the HSE, the member of staff should be given a clear statement, in writing, as to the reasons why.

If a member of staff remains concerned about the situation, he/she is free to consult with or report to the HSE.

The Designated Liaison Person, or his/her nominated replacement, will immediately, or as soon as possible thereafter, inform the Board of Management of the school that a report involving a student in the school has been submitted to the relevant HSE. In the interest of protecting the anonymity of the child, no details of the report will be disclosed to the Board of Management unless there are issues which need to be addressed directly by the Board.

3.4 Written Records

A written record of all the information should be kept. Personnel should note carefully

- What they have observed
- When they observed it.
- Signs of physical injury described in detail (if appropriate, sketched)

Any comment by the child concerned, or by any other person, about how an injury occurred should be recorded, preferably quoting words actually used, as soon as possible after the comment has been made.

The record of the discussion should be signed and dated and given to and retained by the Designated Liaison Person.

These records will be regarded as highly confidential.

3.4 - Reporting

The DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to the appropriate local health office (LHO) of the HSE. The DLP will immediately act in accordance with the procedures.

A written record of the disclosure will be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it.

Any written statement by the student involved will also be kept.

Where an allegation of abuse is made by an adult, a written statement will be sought from this person.

These statements will be kept by the DLP in the strictest confidence.

The Designated Liaison Person will always inform the Board of Management of the allegation whether or not the matter is reported.

Any school personnel involved in a case will (if required) be granted permission to attend a child protection conference with the appropriate LHO of the HSE. (appendix)

When a report is being made to a HSE, the Board of Management of the school will also be informed as soon as possible. (appendix)

The parent/carer will also be informed , unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place the child at further risk.

The Designated Liaison Person who is submitting a report to the HSE or An Garda should keep a record of the information communicated to the parent/carer.

A decision not to inform a parent/carer should also be recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.

The school will undertake if requested to monitor the child's behaviour in a manner that is consistent with the school's duty of care to all students. This may include observing the child's behaviour, peer interactions, school progress or informal conversations.

Section 4 - Where a School Employee may be Involved

4.1 General

While the protection of students, their safety and well-being is the priority, the school also has duties and responsibilities, as an Employer, in respect of employees.

Any allegation of abuse by an employee should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff including counselling where necessary. The employee should be treated fairly which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry.

It is essential that at all times the matter be treated in the strictest confidence and that the identity of the employee should not be disclosed until such time as the employee has been offered the opportunity to address and/or be represented to the employer.

4.2 The Procedure for Dealing with the Employee

4.2.1 Designated Liaison Person

Suspicion

Where a suspicion exists regarding the conduct of a school employee the DLP may seek advice from the HSE.

If the DLP feels that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion they may report it to the HSE.

The DLP will also report it to the Board of Management

Where an allegation of abuse is made

The DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to the appropriate LHO of the HSE. The DLP will immediately act in accordance with the procedures as outlined above.

A written record of the disclosure will be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it.

Any written statement by the student involved will also be kept.

Where an allegation of abuse is made by an adult, a written statement will be sought from this person.

These statements will be kept by the DLP in the strictest confidence.

The Designated Liaison Person will always inform the Board of Management of the allegation whether or not the matter is reported.

4.2.2 Board of Management

It is the the Board of Management who is responsible for addressing the employment issues with regard to Employment Legislation and any other Employee Relations Policies in existence

The Board of Management should have in place a written protocol (see Appendix 5. Protocol authorizing immediate action) to authorize any immediate actions which may be required to protect children.

This Protocol will take account of

- the principles of natural justice and
- the presumption of innocence and
- the fair procedures that should be adhered to.

An emergency meeting of the Board of Management should be convened authorizing immediate action. Where circumstances warrant it as a precautionary measure to protect students in the school the Board of Management may authorise the Principal to absent an employee from the school as allowed under the Protocol for Immediate Action, section 5.2 of the Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools. (appendix)

Every effort should be made to investigate complaints against employees promptly bearing in mind the serious implications for an innocent employee. Legal advice will always be sought by the Board of Management in these cases as circumstances can vary from one case to another

When the Board of Management becomes aware of an allegation of abuse against a school employee, the Board of Management will arrange to privately inform the employee of the following:

- i) the fact that an allegation has been made against him/her;
- ii) the nature of the allegation;
- iii) whether or not the matter has been reported to the LHO of the HSE by the Designated Liaison Person;

The employee should be given a copy of the written record and/or allegation, and any other related documentation (with regard to appropriate measures to protect the student)

Once the matter has been reported to the HSE the employee should be offered the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing to the Board of Management within a specified period of time. The employee should be told that his/her explanation to the Board of Management would also have to be passed on to the HSE.

Where such an absence is directed, the Department of Education and Science should immediately be contacted with regard to a replacement and formal approval for the payment of remuneration or ex-gratia payments in lieu of remuneration as appropriate,

Where the Board of Management is unsure as to whether the nature of the allegations warrants the absence of the employee from the school while the matter is being investigated, the Board of Management should consult with the Child Care Manager of the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána for advice as to the action that those authorities would consider necessary. Following those consultations, the Board of Management will have due regard for the advice offered. If the Board considers it necessary, it will immediately direct the employee to absent him/herself from the school.

The principles of natural justice and fair procedures will be adhered to. This absence will not imply any degree of guilt on the part of the school employee.

Where it may not be possible for a Board of Management to conduct any proper enquiry into the allegations, the Board of Management will maintain regular and close liaison with the relevant authorities and a decision on the position of the school employee will be taken having due regard to the advice given to the Board of Management by those authorities. In these circumstances the Board of Management will maintain a close liaison with these authorities to ensure that actions taken do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by the HSE or An Garda Síochána.

Strict confidentiality about all matters relating to these issues will be maintained. The principles of due process and natural justice will be adhered to by the Board of Management

Any further follow up action required should accord with established grievance and disciplinary procedures for the Voluntary Secondary sector and any follow up will only be made following consultation with the HSE (and the Garda Siochana if involved). With regard to any decision about further action or the future position of the employee the **Board of Management** will advise the employee of the situation and will follow the agreed procedures for the sector.

The Department of Education and Science is to be informed of the outcome.

The **Board of Management** will maintain close contact with the HSE to ensure that the HSE act promptly in cases of alleged abuse involving school employees.

Every effort will be made by the Board to ensure that such investigations are handled with regard to the serious implications for an innocent employee. The **Board of Management** will ask the HSE to pass on any reports and records to itself and the employee in question where appropriate in order to assist the **Board of Management** in reaching a decision as to the action to be taken in the longer term concerning the employee. The **Board of Management** will require the HSE to notify it of the outcome of investigations.

Section 5 - Peer Abuse and Bullying

5.1 General

It is the policy of this school that potentially abusive behaviour between children is not ignored and will be reported to the HSE if appropriate.

It is also the policy of this school that the different types of behaviour be clearly identified and that no young person is wrongly labelled “a child abuser”.

5.2 Peer abuse

Peer abuse is a complex area and school personnel are advised to familiarize themselves in this regard with the advice provided in Chapter 11 of Children First. (a copy of which is attached to this policy) The School will make these guidelines available to all members of Staff.

5.3 Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly

among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviour, such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, exclusion or extortion by one or more persons against a victim. The more extreme forms of bullying behaviour, when they are perpetrated by adults rather than children, would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse.

A clear policy on bullying has been drawn up by the school dealing with bullying between students, bullying within the staff and bullying by staff of students. It is important that teachers and students are aware of this policy and of procedural guidelines to deal with bullying. These should be taken in conjunction with the school's code of behaviour and discipline.

In situations where the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school should consult the relevant HSE with a view to drawing up an appropriate response.

5.3 Sexualised Behaviour Between Children

5.3.1 General

It is important that potentially abusive behaviour between children is not ignored and, as appropriate, certain cases should be referred to the HSE. However, it is also very important that the different types of behaviour are clearly identified and that no young person is wrongly labelled "a child abuser", without a clear analysis of the particular behaviour.

The Children First guidelines outline four different categories of behaviour, which warrant attention. These are outlined in Appendix 9

5.4.2 Dealing with Sexualised Behaviour Between Children

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the reporting procedures outlined in this policy will be followed.

Inappropriate sexualised behaviour between children, as outlined in Appendix 8 and in Chapter 11 of Children First, will be taken seriously.

The School will arrange separate meetings with the parents/carers of all the children involved in such behaviour with a view to resolving the situation.

The School also recognizes that Inappropriate sexualised behaviour may also be indicative of a situation that requires assessment by the HSE and will take steps to see that this is brought to the notice of the HSE to ensure that early referral and intervention is received.

In cases where school personnel have concerns about a child, but the Designated Liaison Person is not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person should seek advice from the Duty Social Worker in the HSE. In consulting the Duty Social Worker, the Designated Liaison Person should be explicit that he/she is requesting advice and consultation and that he/she is not making a report. At this informal stage the Designated Liaison Person need not give identifying details. If a HSE advises that a referral should be made, the Designated Liaison Person should act on that advice.

5.5 The Safety of the Victim

The school will make appropriate arrangements to minimise the possibility of any abusive behaviour re-occurring within the school. The school will also provide assurances to parents/carers of the abuse victim that the school will take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their children within the school. The principal and teachers concerned will make arrangements to meet, individually, the parents/carers of all the children involved in the incident with a view to addressing the matter.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Reasonable Grounds for Concern:

- i) Specific indication from the child that he/she was abused;
- ii) An account by a person who saw the child being abused;
- iii) Evidence, such as injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- iv) An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it is a case of abuse – e.g. a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour; and
- v) Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Appendix 2. Recognising Child Abuse.

Child abuse can take different forms, but usually consists of one or more of the following:

Neglect: Where a child's needs for food, warmth, shelter, nurturing and safety are not provided to the extent that the child suffers significant harm.

This includes: -

- Abandonment/desertion
- Living alone
- Living with young/unreliable carers
- Poor nourishment i.e. inappropriate food or erratic feeding
- Lack of :
 - Warmth
 - Clothing
- Unhygienic home conditions
- Exposure to physical and moral dangers
- Non-organic failure to thrive - The child fails to grow at the expected weight.
The weight, length and head circumferences measurements may fall below the third percentile.
- Poor health, persistent minor illnesses
- Repeated accidents
- Child not receiving adequate supervision

- Persistently hungry child
- Persistently dirty, smelly child
- Poor school attendance
- Continuing non attendance at appropriate clinics.

Emotional Abuse: Where a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security is not being met.

Evaluation of emotional abuse is extremely difficult. The following are indicators associated with emotional abuse. These behaviours can be present where abuse is not a factor, therefore appropriate medical, psychological and social assessment is required.

- Persistent rejection
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of comfort and love
- Poor/no stimulation
- Sensory deprivation
- Lack of continuity of care (i.e. different carers/moves)
- Serious over protectiveness
- Inappropriate expectations of child
- Locking in cupboard/bedrooms etc.
- Persistent withdrawal of love/affection as punishment

Sexual Abuse:

Where a child is used for the sexual gratification of another.

Signs or symptoms which may occur in children or adolescents

- Hints about sexual activity.
- A sudden change toward uncharacteristic sexual play with peers or toys or with themselves, or sexually aggressive behaviour with others.
- Detailed or age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour (especially by young children).
- Excessive fear of adults or displaying apprehension or withdrawn behaviour, or conversely very aggressive behaviour.
- Excessive attachment to adults.
- Inappropriate seductive behaviour.
- Excessive fears of settling down at bedtime and/or being left alone.
 - Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities involving the removal of clothing e.g. swimming.

Physical Abuse:

Where a child is assaulted or injured in some way that is deliberate.

Types of Physical Injuries which may be seen:

- Skin, mouth and bone injuries are most typical. Particular attention should be given to minor injuries such as facial bruises and damage in the mouth.
- Burns
- Scalds
- Bite marks
- Cigarette burns

- Kick marks
- Ear bruising
- Bruises -
 - finger tip
 - occurring on a baby before the age of mobility
 - multiple bruises along lower spine or on upper buttocks
 - bruises located behind the knees or which show pattern of an implement such as a strap.

Other tell tale symptoms

- Unexplained failure to thrive.
- “Frozen Gaze” i.e. wide-eyed immobilised expression of child who has learned not to cry because he/she will be subjected to physical abuse.
- Explanation given as cause of an injury which is at variance with clinical findings.

Appendix 3. Dealing with Disclosures from Students

An abused child is likely to be under severe emotional stress and a member of staff may be the only adult whom the child is prepared to trust. Great care should be taken not to damage that trust.

When information is offered in confidence, the member of staff will need tact and sensitivity in responding to the disclosure. The member of staff will need to reassure the child, and endeavour to retain his or her trust, while explaining the need for action, which will necessarily involve other adults being informed. It is important to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her, but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anyone else.

Appendix 4. Whether to Report the Matter

Where the Designated Liaison Person is not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person should seek advice from the Duty Social Worker in the HSE. In consulting the Duty Social Worker, the Designated Liaison Person should be explicit that he/she is requesting advice and consultation and that he/she is not making a report. At this informal stage the Designated Liaison Person need not give identifying details. If the HSE advises that a referral should be made, the Designated Liaison Person should act on that advice.

The Designated Liaison Person, or his/her nominated replacement, will immediately, or as soon as possible thereafter, inform the Board of Management of the school that a report involving a student in the school has been submitted to the LHO of the HSE. In the interest of protecting the anonymity of the child, no details of the report will be disclosed to the Board of Management unless there are issues, which need to be addressed directly by the Board.

Appendix 5. Child Protection Conference

It would be normal for a person attending a child protection conference to provide a report to the conference.

Appendix 6. Protocol Authorising Immediate Action

Protocol authorising immediate action under section 5.2 of the Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools.

In the context of the Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools, where circumstances warrant it, as a precautionary measure in order to protect the children in the school and in accordance with the principles of natural justice and the presumption of innocence, the school Principal is authorised by the school management authority to direct an employee to immediately absent himself/herself from the school without loss of pay until the matter has been considered by the Board of Management.

Where the Protocol authorizing immediate action is invoked to absent an employee from the school an emergency meeting of the Board of Management should be convened.

The employee will be invited to a meeting with the Principal, the purpose of which is to inform the employee of the allegation and the action being taken. The employee may be accompanied by an appropriate person of his or her choice and will be so advised.

In any event, the employee will also be advised of the matter, in writing.

Where the allegation of abuse is against the Designated Liaison Person, the Board of Management will assume the responsibility for reporting the matter to the HSE

Appendix 7. Guidelines for the protection of teachers against allegations of improper behaviour towards students (ASTI).

1. Teachers are professionals. Teachers are in a position of trust and are expected to exercise reasonable care which a careful and reasonable parent would exercise in similar circumstances.
2. Teaching involves the creation of friendly and respectful relationships between teachers and students. Teachers must however, maintain an arms length professionalism which is central to the avoidance of allegations of improper conduct.
3. Where the exercise of professional duties involves dealing with students on sensitive issues, the following safeguards apply:
 - a) instances of being alone with one student should be avoided where possible
 - b) other members of staff should be informed of one-to-one tuition or educational contact with students
 - c) doors should be left open where one-to-one contact is unavoidable.
4. The health and safety of students overrides all other concerns. The exercise of prudent, professional discretion is required in such areas as toilets and changing rooms where tact and discretion on the part of staff are called for.
5. To protect the teacher's personal and professional reputation prudent behaviour and correct procedures are essential.

Appendix 8. Sexual abuse by children and young people

Normal Sexual Exploration:

This could consist of naive play between two children which involves the exploration of their sexuality. This type of behaviour may be prompted by exchanges between children such as: “you show me yours and I’ll show you mine”. One of the key aspects of this behaviour is the tone of it. There should not be any coercive or dominating aspects to this behaviour. Usually, there is no need for child protection intervention of any kind in this type of situation.

Abuse Reactive Behaviour:

In this situation, one child who has been abused already, acts out the same behaviour on another child. While this is serious behaviour and needs to be treated as such, the emphasis should be on addressing the needs of the child perpetrator.

Sexually Obsessive Behaviour:

In this type of situation the children may engage in sexually compulsive behaviour. An example of this would be excessive masturbation which may well be meeting some other emotional need. Most children masturbate at some point in their lives. However, where children are in care or in families where care and attention is missing, they may have extreme comfort needs that are not being met and may move from masturbation to excessive interest or curiosity in sex, which takes on excessive or compulsive aspects. These children may not have been sexually abused but they may be extremely needy and may need very specific help in addressing these needs.

Abusive Behaviour by Adolescents and Young People:

Behaviour that is abusive will have elements of domination, coercion or bribery and certainly secrecy. The fact that the behaviour is carried out by an adolescent, for example does not, in itself, make it “experimentation”. However, if there is no age difference between the two children or no difference in status, power or intellect, then one could argue that this is indeed experimentation. On the other hand, if the adolescent is aged thirteen and the child is aged three, this gap in itself creates an abusive quality which should be taken seriously.

Appendix 9

Private and Confidential

Standard Form for Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns

In case of Emergency or outside HSE office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána
To Principal Social Worker/Designate:

This will be printed as relevant to each Community Care Area

1. Details of Child:

Name: _____ Male: ___ Female: ___

Address: _____ Age/D.O.B.: _____

_____ School: _____

1a. Name of Mother: _____ Name of Father: _____

Address of Mother if different to Child: Address of Father if different to Child:

Telephone Number: _____ Telephone Number: _____

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

1c. Household Composition:

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

- 2.** Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) (if known).