

Plean Scoile

St Fiacc's NS

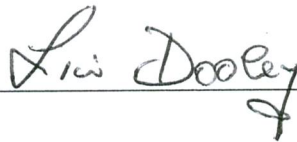
Stay Safe Policy



St. Fiacc's N.S.  
Fírinne le Misneach

Formulated/Ratified/Reviewed	By
Ratified 23/10/18	BOM
Reviewed 09/01/19	Staff

Signed Chairperson BOM

  
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## Stay Safe Policy St. Fiacc's NS

### Overview and aims

The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme for primary schools. The **aim** of the programme is to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying through the provision of personal safety education for children and training for teachers, school management boards and parents.

The Programme is developmentally structured to enable primary school teachers to deliver an abuse prevention education that addresses personal safety issues such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as bullying and stranger danger.

The Programme identifies the following areas:

- About Feelings: To recognise the importance of feelings; how to express them appropriately and in particular to recognise unsafe feelings
- About Friendship: Making and keeping friends and the value of friendship
- About Bullying: What bullying is; strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour, and that it is never acceptable to bully others
- The importance of building confidence and self esteem
- How to identify and deal with inappropriate or unsafe touch
- That it is ok to say 'no' to an adult in a situation where they feel unsafe, threatened or frightened
- To identify trusted adults whom they should tell if they are feeling frightened, threatened, worried or unsafe in any way
- To understand how someone might bribe, trick or threaten them to keep a secret
- It is never their fault if they are victimised or abused
- That they should never go anywhere with or take anything from a stranger
- Appropriate language for telling
- The Stay Safe rules:

*Say No, Get Away and Tell*

*Never keep secrets about touch*

*Never go anywhere with or take anything from a stranger*

The importance of building confidence and self esteem and developing assertiveness and strong clear communication is emphasised throughout the programme. Children are taught that it is not their fault if they are bullied or abused.

### Social Personal and Health Education

The Stay Safe programme is implemented within the context of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum. (See SPHE Policy)

The implementation of the Stay Safe programme is a collaborative process involving parents, teachers and the wider school community taking a co-ordinated approach to child protection and child abuse prevention through safety skills education.

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### **Rationale for the Stay Safe programme**

Child abuse has no boundaries. It occurs at every socioeconomic level, crosses ethnic and cultural lines, and is found within all religions and at all levels of education.

Abused and neglected children can be found in almost every school in the country. Research shows that more than half of the children who are abused and neglected are of a school going age.

As well as reducing children's vulnerability to abuse, the Stay Safe programme aims to increase wellbeing and resilience by giving children knowledge, skills and strategies in an age-appropriate manner, using developmentally structured lessons and resources to empower them.

Research on the disclosure patterns of children showed that following their participation in the Stay Safe programme children were more likely to have purposively reported the abuse, were more likely to tell their teachers, and their reports were more likely to be substantiated (MacIntyre & Carr, 1999b).

### **Children with Special Vulnerabilities**

Children with specific vulnerabilities are more at risk of various types of abuse and victimisation. Factors associated with increased risk of child abuse include:

- The absence of one or both parents
- Use of alcohol or drugs in the family of victim
- Having a physical disability
- Being cared for by someone other than parents
- Having a learning disability
- Having social or emotional difficulties

The reasons for the added vulnerabilities of children with SEN are many and varied and include

- Communication barriers
- Attitudes and assumptions in society that abuse does not happen to children with special educational needs
- Dependency
- Reluctance to challenge carers
- A lack of participation and choice in decision-making
- Higher levels of bullying and limited personal safety programmes and personal, social and sex education. (UK Dept. of Children, Schools and Families, 2009)

Children with SEN also experience bullying more frequently and are more likely to feel isolated, lonely, and socially excluded (National Disability Authority, 2014).

The importance of delivering the key messages of the Stay Safe programme to vulnerable children including those with SEN, cannot be overestimated.

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The Stay Safe lessons are designed for a wide diversity of learners and learning styles and facilitate an inclusive approach. For children with specific vulnerabilities or SEN, individual needs should be identified and addressed through differentiation and where necessary more targeted individual adaptations or supports should be put in a place and included in the IEP.

### **Differentiation**

Differentiation requires teachers to vary their approaches in order to accommodate various learning styles, ability levels and interests. The SPHE Curriculum advocates the use of a broad range of active learning methodologies as outlined earlier.

The greater the variety in the methodologies adopted by the teacher, the more avenues and entry points into learning are provided for the child. Key messages and learning intentions at the start of each Stay Safe lesson will assist teachers seeking to differentiate teaching and learning for their pupils.

As part of a differentiated approach St. Fiacc's values the merit of pre teaching relevant vocabulary and reinforcement of key messages as part of learning support or resource teaching time. Special needs assistants, under the direction of the class teacher, also play an important role in reinforcing and consolidating the learning of key messages.

In addition to the multimedia approach, the use of a wide variety of teaching methods and the inclusion of extension activities allow greater scope for differentiation.

### **Bullying**

Bullying, as defined in the Department of Education and Skills (DES) procedures, is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

Bullying includes deliberate exclusion; malicious gossip; relational bullying; cyber-bullying; identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

St. Fiacc's Anti-Bullying strategies are outlined in our Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyberbullying policies.

### **Child Abuse**

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Most abused children will experience more than one type of abuse. For example, a child who is sexually abused may also experience physical abuse and injury.

St. Fiacc's has formally adopted and implemented, without modification, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of its overall Child Safeguarding Statement.

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### **Implementing the Programme**

The Stay Safe programme is taught in its entirety over one school year. Each topic builds on the learning from the previous topic. Teachers therefore ensure that topics are taught consecutively, beginning with Topic 1 and working through to Topic 5. St. Fiacc's works through the programme in one block as it is more effective. The block runs from January to March annually.

St. Fiacc's plans their SPHE programme of work to ensure that all classes are doing the programme at the same time. The Stay Safe programme utilises a multi-media approach to enhance learning and concept acquisition.

### **Stay Safe Lesson Plans**

The lesson plans are divided into the five Stay Safe Topics:

- Feeling Safe and Unsafe
- Friendship and Bullying
- Touches
- Secrets and Telling
- Strangers

The content and teaching resources for the Stay Safe programme can all be accessed on the accompanying DVD and Teacher Resources available on [www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm](http://www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm) and [www.pdst.ie/staysafe](http://www.pdst.ie/staysafe)

### **Approaches and Methodologies**

In common with the strands of the SPHE curriculum much of the Stay Safe content is based on process and on establishing patterns of behaviour. Thus, the teaching process emphasises active learning and role-play. It is not enough that children remember the personal safety skills they learn, they must also be able to put these skills into practice in their daily lives.

The lesson plans are developmentally tailored. A multimedia approach is utilised to enhance learning and concept acquisition. Concepts are introduced gradually. Each new lesson builds naturally on the previous one.

Throughout the programme approaches and methodologies such as class/group discussion, active learning, circle work, role play, collaborative learning, problem solving, skills through content, cooperative games, drama and art work, are utilised to encourage pupil engagement and to promote learning.

### **Assessment**

The guidelines focus on two principal approaches to Assessment

- Assessment of Learning
- Assessment for Learning

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A number of assessment methods, based on the Assessment guidelines, including teacher observation, conferencing, questioning, concept mapping, self-assessment, portfolio assessment, and teacher designed tasks can be used across the programme

### **Possibility of disclosure:**

Since the underlying message of the Stay Safe programme is that children can and should tell an adult if they have a problem, it is possible that a child in the class may be prompted to confide in the teacher. Teachers should be familiar with DES procedures on responding appropriately to suspicions or disclosures of child abuse. (cf Child Safeguarding Statement)

### **Parental Involvement**

Partnership with parents is an essential component in the promotion and building of key life skills. Research has shown that parental involvement in abuse prevention programmes is directly related to increased programme success. This is due to the increased communication between the parent/carer and child about sensitive issues and abuse. Also parental involvement gives children more opportunities to repeat the concepts and messages learned.

Parental participation is an essential part of the programme both in terms of reinforcement and follow-up.

Home school links (HSL) on each topic are included throughout the programme. These HSL will inform parents/carers on the topics and specific lessons being covered in class and how they can reinforce the messages at home.

Parents have the right to opt their child/children out of any of the sensitive aspects of the SPHE programme, including Stay Safe, if they so wish. Therefore, at St. Fiacc's we inform parents/carers that Stay Safe is being implemented in the school. This is normally done as part of the enrolment process. Parents are invited to contact the school if they have any queries or concerns about their child's participation in the programme. It is not necessary to get parental consent in writing before teaching Stay Safe. However in the event that a parent withdraws their child from participation in the programme, the school keeps a written record of their reasons for so doing.

Parents/carers are advised in advance of commencement of lessons by way of a text or note. Parents can familiarise themselves with the content of all Stay Safe lessons at [www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm](http://www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm) and [www.pdst.ie/staysafe](http://www.pdst.ie/staysafe).

### **Other Policies**

Child Safeguarding Statement; SPHE Policy; Admissions and Participation Policy; Safety Statement; Anti-Bullying & Anti-cyberbullying Policies; Curricular Policies