

SAFEGUARDING

AND

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

St James’s Primary School

and

Nursery Unit

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Breanda Clenaghan

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Paula Donaghy

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Nursery): Miss Aisling Cullen

Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: Mrs Samantha Sayers

This Policy was formally agreed by the Principal and Governors in June 2022.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Signed: | Paula Cunningham | Principal |
| Signed: | Anne McDermott | Chair of Governors |
| Date: | 24th February 2023 |  |
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**INTRODUCTION**

The governors and staff of St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part in protecting our pupils from harm.

All staff and Governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by DE: Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, A Guide for Schools (2017/04) and SBNI [The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland] Regional Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures 2017

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decisions concerning the child.This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child *– the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration.* The ‘paramountcy’ of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures.

Safeguarding is more than child protection. It “begins with preventative education and activities which enable children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and well being is promoted. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection, which refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer harm” (Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, DE, 2017).

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

There are five main elements to our policy:

1. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
2. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
3. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
4. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
5. Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan

**The Safeguarding Team at St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit**

Chair of Governors: Mrs Ann Mc Dermott

Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance: Mrs Samantha Sayers

Principal: Mrs Paula Cunningham

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Breanda Clenaghan

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Paula Donaghy

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection(Nursery): Miss Marian Morrow

**WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995)

‘A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm. ‘Harm’ means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development, and the question of whether harm is significant is determined in accordance with Article 50(3) of the Children Order.

**Types of Abuse**

Child abuse may take a number of forms, including:

**Physical Abuse** – is deliberately physically hurting a child, or the wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

(Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, DE, 2017)

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

* Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
* Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
* Unexplained lacerations, fractions or abrasions
* Untreated injuries
* Self-destructive tendencies
* Chronic runaway
* Fear of going home

**Emotional Abuse** – is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems, parental substance misuse and cyber bullying, may expose a child to emotional abuse. (Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, DE, 2017)

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

* Bullying of others
* Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
* Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
* Depression
* Signs of mutilation
* Attention seeking
* Chronic runaway
* Wetting and soiling
* Sudden speech disorders
* Low self-esteem

**Sexual Abuse** – involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. (Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, DE, 2017)

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

* Bruised or sore genitals
* Genital infection
* Difficulty in walking or sitting
* Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
* Low self-esteem
* Chronic depression
* Substance abuse
* Personality changes
* Fear of going home

**Neglect** – is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, hygiene, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. (Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, DE, 2017)

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

* Poor hygiene
* Constant hunger/cramming food
* Inadequate / inappropriate clothing
* Constant tiredness
* Exposed to danger / lack of adequate supervision
* Untreated illness
* Lack of peer relationships
* Compulsive stealing / begging

**Exploitation –** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

*Although ‘exploitation’ is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.* (Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, DE, 2017)

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

Specific Types of Abuse

* Grooming
* Child Sexual Exploitation
* Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse
* Female Genital Mutilation
* Forced Marriage
* Children who Display Harmful Sexualised Behaviour
* E-Safety/Internet Abuse
* Sexting

Further details on the above specific types of abuse can be found in Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, DE, 2017.

**PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE**

**The designated teacher for child protection (DT)** is Breanda Clenaghan

In her absence **the deputy designated teacher for child protection (DDT)** Paula Donaghy will assume responsibility for child protection. On the rare occasion that neither DT nor DDT is in the school the Principal, Mrs Paula Cunningham will assume responsibility for child protection.

If a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff or a volunteer which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff or volunteer has concerns about a child**, they must act promptly.**

**He/she should not investigate –** this is a matter for social services – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with him/her, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the notes to the DT (St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit Child Protection Report Form should be completed and given to the DT).

The DT will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

The DT, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to social services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services.** Unless there are concerns that to do so may place the child at risk of harm, the parents will be informed immediately.

The DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) - Designated Officer for Child Protection at the EA (North Eastern Region), or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the DT will inform:

* Social Services
* EA (NE Region)/CCMS’s Designated Officer for Child Protection

**(This will be done in an envelope marked ‘CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION’ or email referral, using a protected password).**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the Principal or Vice Principal, must be informed immediately. Where the matter is referred to social services the member of staff or volunteer may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against the Principal, the DT must be informed immediately. He/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff or volunteer feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT.

It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held ‘in confidence’. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be informed.

**ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER (DT) AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER (DDT)**

The DT:

* To provide training to all school staff
* Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff or volunteer
* Responsibility for recordkeeping of all child protection concerns
* Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI Public Protection Units
* Liaising with EA (NE Region)/CCMS Designated Officers for Child Protection
* Keeping the school Principal informed
* The lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school’s child protection policy
* Ensures parents receive a copy of the child protection policy every 2 years which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made to Social Services and the role of the school regarding this
* Promotion of a child protection ethos in the school
* Written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
* Maintains all records pertaining to child protection in a secure location (accessed only by the Designated Teacher and the School Principal as appropriate)

DDT:

To support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required

**ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

The Board of Governors will delegate a specific member of the governing body to take the lead in safeguarding/child protection issues in order to be able to advise the Governors on:

* The role of the designated teachers;
* The content of child protection policies;
* The content of a code of conduct for adults within the school;
* The content of the termly updates and full Annual Designated Teachers Report;
* Recruitment, selection, vetting and induction of staff.

**HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE/RAISE A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN**

If a parent has a child protection concern they can follow the guide below:

I have a concern about my/a child’s safety

|  |
| --- |
| I can talk to the class teacher |

If I am still concerned I can talk to the Principal – Mrs Cunningham

Or

I can talk to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection –

If I am still concerned I can talk or write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors

At anytime, I can write or talk to a Social Worker or the Police

|  |
| --- |
| If I am still concerned I can contact the NI Public Services Ombudsman |

**St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit’s VETTING PROCEDURES**

The school’s vetting processes are compliant with practice advised in DE circulars 2006/06, 2006/07, 2006/08, 2006/09, 2008/03, 2012/19 and 2013/01. Copies of these circulars are available on the DE website: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk/), or www.eani.org/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection/#decircular.

**Volunteers**

There are two types of volunteers working in schools: those who work unsupervised and those who work under supervision. Volunteers who work unsupervised are required to have an Enhanced Disclosure Check (EDC). A volunteer who works under supervision is not required to obtain an EDC, however the school must determine whether the level of supervision meets the statutory standard (see DE Circular 2012/19). Schools must ensure that volunteers such as coaches, music tutors, school photographers etc., who are employed by others, have the necessary clearances in place.

**Visitors**

Visitors to schools do not routinely need to be vetted before being allowed onto school premises. Such visitors should be managed by school staff and their access to areas and movement within the school should be restricted as needs require. All visitors should follow our Code of Conduct for visitors set out in our Notice to Visitors.

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF**

The code of conduct is known to all staff and volunteers. It reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school and is available as a separate policy.

**THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm of our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protections.

The school community will therefore:

* Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
* Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
* Include in the curriculum opportunities for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to whom they should turn for help if the need arises.

The staff of St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit recognises that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour maybe challenging or they may be withdrawn.

St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit will endeavour to support the pupils who are exposed to risk of harm through supporting such pupils in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan.

Support for all pupils in the school in developing skills in self protection and developing confidence will be afforded as follows:

* The content of the curriculum, particularly Personal Development and Mutual Understanding.
* The school ethos which promotes a positive supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
* The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others
* Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, PSNI and the school nurse.

**ANTI BULLYING POLICY**

Our Anti Bullying policy, set out in a separate policy, documents how we strive to prevent bullying and how we deal with it should it occur.

**PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

Our policy on physical restraint by staff is set out in a separate policy, Safe Handling and Reasonable Force, in accordance with guidelines from the Education Authority. It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Our Health and Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

**THE INTERNET AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

Our policies on the internet and digital technologies and e-Safety are set out in a separate document and are informed by DE guidance. They acknowledge the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically they address safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

# Our e-Safety Policy, supported by the school’s Acceptable Use Agreement for staff, governors, visitors and pupils, is to protect the interests and safety of the whole school community. It is linked to other school policies including those for UICT, Behaviour, Health and Safety, Child Protection, and Anti-bullying.

# It has been agreed by the UICT Coordinator, staff, pupils and parents and approved by the Governing Body. The e-Safety policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually.

# All staff receive regular information and training on e-Safety issues through the co-ordinator at staff meetings.

# All staff are encouraged to incorporate e-Safety activities and awareness within their lessons.

# Parents/guardians are asked to read through and sign the Acceptable Use Agreement on behalf of their child.

# Parents/guardians are required to make a decision as to whether they consent to images of their child being taken/used on the school website.

# The school website contains an e-Safety page for parents with useful information and links to sites like CEOP’s thinkuknow.

# (Reference circulars: 2007/01, 2011/22, 2016/27, 2016/26)

**PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

Our policy on the photography (recording) and images of children is set out in a separate document and is also part of our UICT policy and e-Safety policy.

**EDUCATIONAL TRIPS / VISITS**

Our policy on Educational Trips/Visits is set out in a separate policy.

**INTIMATE CARE POLICY**

Our policy on toileting and intimate care is set out in a separate policy.

**RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY POLICY**

Our RSE Policy is set out in a separate document.

**RECORD KEEPING**

The school maintains the child protection records in keeping with DE Circulars 2015/13. Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against a member of Staff and 2020/07 Child Protection: Record Keeping in Schools.

**SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING**

All governors should have initial Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) child protection training with the Chair and Designated Governor for Child Protection undertaking full CPSS training.

All Governors should undertake refresher Child Protection training every term of office (four years).

Whole school staff to be trained annually in safeguarding procedures.

**OPERATION ENCOMPASS**

We are an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between local Police and our school, aimed at supporting children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. As a school, we recognise that children’s exposure to domestic violence is a traumatic event for them.

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure. Domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience and can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. Operation Encompass aims to mitigate this harm by enabling the provision of immediate support. This rapid provision of support within the school environment means children are better safeguarded against the short, medium and long-term effects of domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass school, when the police have attended a domestic incident and one of our pupils is present, they will make contact with the school at the start of the next working day to share this information with a member of the school safeguarding team. This will allow the school safeguarding team to provide immediate emotional support to this child as well as giving the designated teacher greater insight into any wider safeguarding concerns.

This information will be treated in strict confidence, like any other category of child protection information. It will be processed as per DE Circular 2020/07 ‘Child Protection Record Keeping in Schools’ and a note will be made in the child’s child protection file. The information received on an Operation Encompass call from the Police will only be shared outside of the safeguarding team on a proportionate and need to know basis. All members of the safeguarding team will complete online Operation Encompass training, so they are able to take these calls. Any staff responsible for answering the phone at school will be made aware of Operation Encompass and the need to pass these calls on with urgency to a member of the Safeguarding team.

Further information see [The Domestic Abuse Information Sharing with Schools etc. Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2022/146/contents/made).

**REVIEWING OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Our Child Protection policy will be reviewed once a year.

**Date ratified by BOG:**

**Date of next review:**

**Appendix 1**

**GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of teachers and non teaching staff in St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit and in contributing, by their efforts and initiative, to the life of the school.

It is essential however, that appropriate steps are taken, through screening and selection arrangements, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school.

**Who is a Volunteer?**

A volunteer is an individual who, subject to the satisfactory procedures below, either

1. Assumes unpaid duties in a school on a regular basis on more than two occasions or
2. Is engaged by the school to accompany or assist in school visits or trips; residential activities or to undertake coaching in sports activities.

Formal arrangements as to selection and vetting should not be required for volunteers who are involved outside school hours and who do not have unsupervised contact with pupils. These would include fund raisers, people using school premises for meetings etc.

**Use of Volunteers**

There are three main categories into which the use of volunteers might be grouped and to which guidance will apply:

* During school hours involving direct contact with pupils
* Outside school hours involving direct contact with pupils
* During school hours but not usually involving direct contact with pupils

**Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers**

The school may canvass for volunteers or people may come forward to offer assistance at their own initiative. In many cases potential volunteers may already be known to the school. Others may come forward from the local community.

As a minimum requirement all potential volunteers are asked to provide the following information:

* Meet with the Principal with three forms of identity (as specified by Access NI)
* Undergo an annual criminal record check through Access NI (via CCMS)

Once the volunteer has completed the Access NI check, they should inform the Principal as to whether or not they have been cleared to volunteer in the school. The Principal will ask to see their Access NI certificate to verify that they have been cleared.

Volunteers are permitted to assist in the school pending their Access NI clearance provided they are supervised.

Students on placement from local Colleges, such as Northern Regional College, must present their Access NI certificate to the school. A copy is then forwarded to Claims and Legal in the Education Authority. Students on work experience from local schools (under the age of 18) are not required to complete an Access NI check.

**The use of Volunteers**

These are thefundamental principles observed when using volunteers:

* the purpose of the volunteer is to assist staff, whether teaching or non-teaching. They are not used as substitutes either to cover activities normally undertaken by paid staff who are absent, or to release such staff to undertake other duties:
* volunteers only work under the supervision and guidance of paid staff and these arrangements should be such as to minimise the opportunities for direct, unsupervised, access to children;
* volunteers are not placed in a position of sole responsibility for the security of children, premises or equipment;
* volunteers should understand the tasks they are to undertake and receive appropriate training (if required) to enable them to perform these;
* volunteers are only allocated duties after consultation and agreement with the teacher or other member of staff with whom the volunteer will be closely involved. Teachers are not to be placed under any pressure to accept a volunteer in their classroom;
* volunteers are not afforded access to records or other information relating to staff or pupils. An exception might be made where a child has a medical or other condition of which all those working with the pupil should be made aware, and where agreement of the parent has been sought.

**Health and Safety Insurance**

Volunteers are owed a duty of care under the requirements of Health and Safety Legislation. St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit therefore ensures that volunteers are treated no less favourably than paid employees in terms of St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit’s obligations under the legislation.

**Duration**

St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit places a time limit on the period of the volunteer’s service. This is done where the work earmarked for the volunteer is likely to be completed within a specific period. Where a volunteer’s involvement is likely to be long term, the school advises the volunteer that he/she will be subject to a trial period, during which the Principal monitors the volunteer’s effectiveness in contributing to the life and work of the school.

**Information and Training**

The school ensures that the volunteer receives such information, guidance, preparation and where necessary, training to enable him/her to perform tasks effectively. As a minimum, volunteers are briefed on:

* the policy of the school and the management authority in relation to pastoral care and child protection, including its behaviour/discipline policy, including rewards and sanctions, and the extent of the volunteer’s authority within it; its safeguarding and child protection procedures
* St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit’s Health and Safety Policy

Arrangements are made for the volunteer to have a formal line of communication to the class teacher/DT/DDT or Vice Principal for reporting issues of concern or the welfare of the children in the school.

**School Security**

St James’s Primary School and Nursery Unit has drawn on the advice from the guidance Document “Security and Personal Safety in Schools” 1997 to establish arrangements for the admission and supervision of volunteers on school premises. Particular attention is drawn to:

* The volunteer registering at the beginning of each visit
* Providing the volunteer with a readily identifiable pass

The school ensures passes are surrendered at the end of each day and when the volunteers’ involvement with the school comes to an end.