

# BROWNLOW INTEGRATED COLLEGE

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY PROCEDURES**

We in Brownlow College have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge. We carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy. This aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse. We help them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe. We believe in a child's right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. The vision and ethos of our school is child central.

All our staff and volunteers have had appropriate background checks. The staff of our school has also adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards pupils. The Code is set out in Appendix 2 to this policy statement.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has a clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The over-riding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child. The problem 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.

### **PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to protect our students by ensuring that all teaching, non-teaching and volunteers have clear guidance as to what action is to be taken, should they suspect abuse.

#### **A. PHYSICAL**

##### **Definition**

Physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

##### **Consequences**

1. Medical Problems
  - ill health
  - anaemia
  - brain damage
2. Developmental problems
3. Psychological problems
4. Long-term effects

<b>PHYSICAL INDICATORS</b>	<b>BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained bruises (in various stages of healing)- grip marks on arms, slap marks, welts, human bite marks, bald spots</li> <li>• Unexplained burns, especially cigarette burns or immersion burns (glove-like)</li> <li>• Unexplained fractures, lacerations or abrasions</li> <li>• Unrelated injuries</li> <li>• Bruising on both sides of the ear – any ‘symmetrical’ bruising is suspicious</li> <li>• Injuries occurring in a time pattern e.g. every Monday morning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self – destructive tendencies</li> <li>• Withdrawn or aggressive (behavioural extremes)</li> <li>• Uncomfortable with physical contact</li> <li>• Arrives at school early or stays late as is afraid to be at home</li> <li>• Chronic runaway (teenagers)</li> <li>• Complaints of soreness</li> <li>• Wears clothing inappropriate to weather to cover body</li> <li>• Child appears frightened or cowed in the presence of adults</li> <li>• Improbable excuses given to explain injuries</li> </ul>

## **B. NEGLECT**

### **Definition**

The persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child’s health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

<b>PHYSICAL INDICATORS</b>	<b>BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abandonment</li> <li>• Consistently unattended medical needs</li> <li>• Consistent hunger, lack of energy, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene</li> <li>• Lice, distended stomach, emaciated</li> <li>• Repeated accidents especially burns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tired or listless (falls asleep in class)</li> <li>• Steals food, begs from classmates</li> <li>• Reports that no carer at home</li> <li>• Frequently absent or late</li> <li>• Self-destructive</li> <li>• Persistent non-attendance at school</li> <li>• Kept away from school medicals</li> <li>• Low self esteem</li> </ul>

## **C. SEXUAL ABUSE**

### **Definition**

The sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult’s or another young person’s own sexual gratification; the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.

## Consequences

All sexual misuse or exploitation of children is abusive. Society has a right to intervene.

1. Consequences can be serious and long-lasting
2. Feelings of betrayal
3. stigmatisation

PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torn, stained or bloody underclothes</li> <li>• Pain or itching of genital area</li> <li>• Difficulty walking or sitting</li> <li>• Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia</li> <li>• Venereal disease</li> <li>• Frequent urinary or yeast infections</li> <li>• Avoidance of lessons, especially PE, games or showers</li> <li>• Bruises, scratches, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs</li> <li>• Chronic ailments such as recurrent abdominal pains or headaches</li> <li>• Unexplained pregnancies where the identity of the father is vague</li> <li>• Be anorexic or bulimic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawal, chronic depression</li> <li>• Excessive sexual precociousness, seductiveness</li> <li>• Role reversal, overly concerned for siblings</li> <li>• Poor self-esteem, self devaluation, lack of confidence</li> <li>• Peer problems, lack of involvement</li> <li>• Massive weight change</li> <li>• Suicide attempts (especially adolescents)</li> <li>• Hysterical, lack of emotional control</li> <li>• Sudden school difficulties</li> <li>• Inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex</li> <li>• Threatened by physical contact</li> </ul>

## D. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

### Definition

Persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well below average in height and weight 'failing to thrive', poor hair and skin, alopecia</li> <li>• Swollen extremities, i.e. icy cold and swollen hands and feet</li> <li>• Recurrent diarrhoea, wetting and soiling</li> <li>• Sudden speech disorders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apathy and dejection</li> <li>• Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations</li> <li>• Rocking/head banging</li> <li>• Inability to play</li> <li>• Indifference to separation from family</li> <li>• Indiscriminate attachment</li> <li>• Fear of parent being contacted</li> </ul>

These lists are **possible** indicators of abuse. Many of the signs could have other explanations.

## **BULLYING**

### **Definition**

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. If bullying persists, parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted with a view to assisting the school to resolve the problem.

A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the school within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the Child Protection procedures described below (*see Anti-Bullying Policy for details*).

### **REFERRAL PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN BROWNLOW COLLEGE**

(1) The designated teacher for Child Protection is

**Mr Mark Callender, Pastoral Care Director.** In his absence, **Mrs Wallace, SENCO,** will assume responsibility for child protection matters.

(2) If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the **MEMBER OF STAFF MUST IMMEDIATELY INFORM THE DESIGNATED TEACHER.**

The member of staff should not investigate the matter but carefully document all relevant details on the Child Protection Concern Form provided. A covering Child Abuse Report will be completed by the Pastoral Care Director.  
(Appendix 1)

(3) The designated teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made. The Designated teacher or the Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. The Principal, in consultation with the designated teacher, will then decide whether in the best interests of the child the matter needs to be formally referred to Social Services and the SELB,

(4) When a decision to formally refer has been made, the school will inform:

- The Social Services and later confirm the referral in writing on a UNOCINI.

- S.E.L.B. Designated officer Jennifer/ Cathy McCann will also be informed at the same time and a copy of the referral forwarded to him/her. (This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL'.
- Parents will be informed by school or Social Services – whichever is appropriate. If no referral is made the parents will be informed of school concerns.

(5) Where the suspected abuse is discovered by the Educational Welfare Officer or the Educational Psychologist, he/she will inform the Designated Teacher and SELB Child Protection Support and Service for schools. Social Services will be informed by Jennifer or Cathy McCann SELB Officers.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff. The Principal, (or the Designated teacher, if he/she is not available), must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Principal). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher (or there deputy, if they are not available), must be informed immediately. She/he will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors has responsibility to ensure that proper procedures have been followed in relation to all allegations of abuse. This will be carried out in June of each year by checking the relevant documents.

## **STAFF DUTIES**

All teachers and all other staff members of the college recognise that to make a report of suspected child abuse is to be acting within the terms of his/her employment and in good faith and moral duty.

The College's employing authority i.e. the Board of Governors will give full support to staff in this incidence, both legally and financially. They will also be protected under the Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Staff of Brownlow Integrated College have a professional and at times a legal responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the designated teacher, Principal and investigative agencies.

Before a child makes a disclosure a professional **must** sensitively make the child aware that they can never promise confidentiality in issues of disclosure.

We at the college appreciate the need of children to have someone to talk to. Our pupils are regularly made aware that any member of staff can be spoken to in relation to any worries they may have. We also follow the system from Form teacher, Year Head and Pastoral Care Director for pupils. Additionally Mrs June Thornbury our Peer Mediation Worker is available in school, as is New Life Counselling staff, to whom pupils may self refer. All those who work in our school are bound to the same standards regarding confidentiality.

If we at the college discover that any of our students (under 16 years) are engaged in sexual activity it is our responsibility to pass this information on to Social Services through the relevant structures within the school management.

### **TALKING TO CHILDREN**

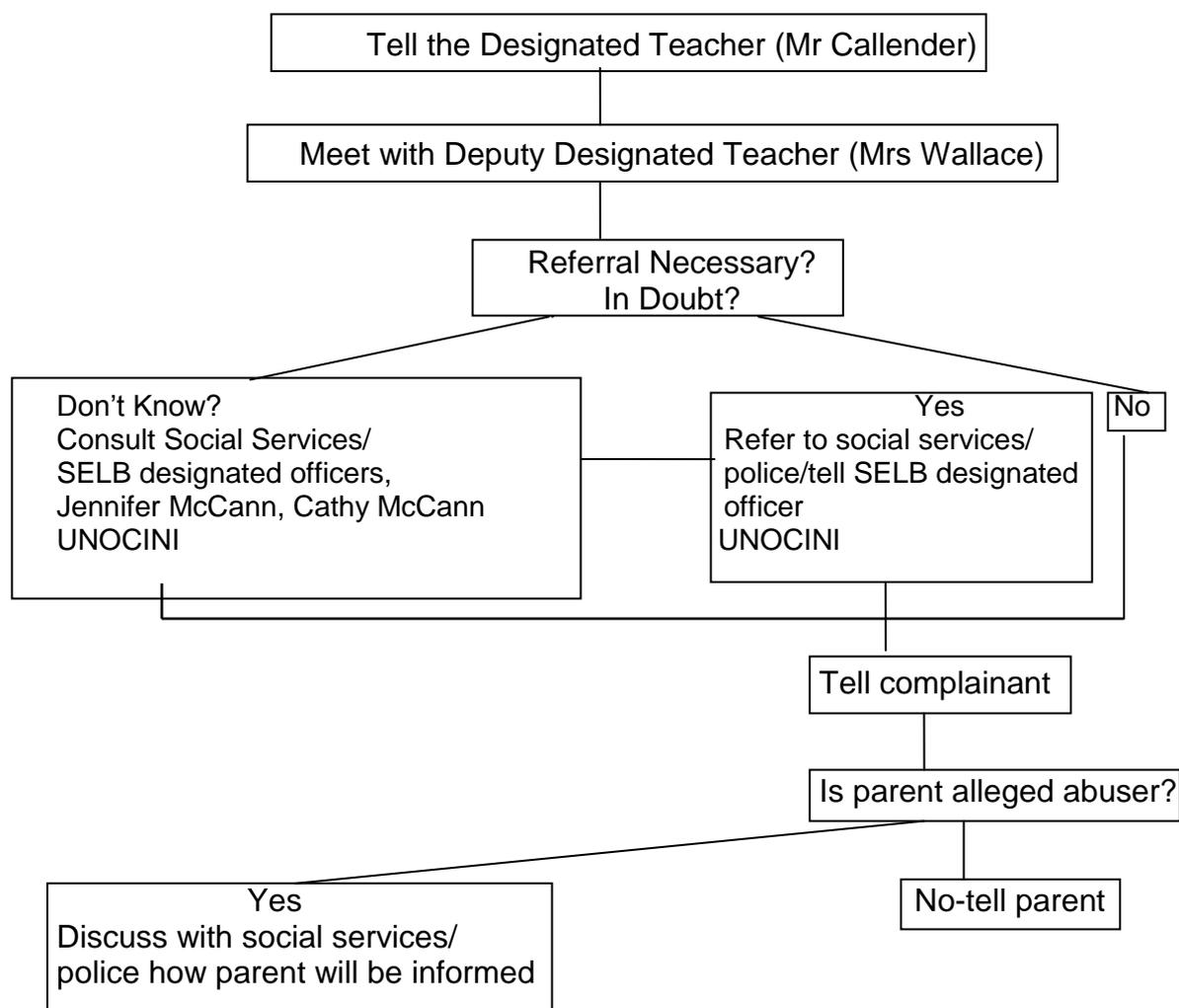
Staff should be aware that care must be taken when asking questions to a child or interpreting his/her responses. Leading questions should not be used, nor should the child be encouraged to change his/her version of events in any way. Should a disclosure result in legal process, this could be seen as leading the young person

Staff are advised to note the date, time, place of any discussions which have taken place, including those who were present and what was said, quoting the words actually used by the young person. Each teacher has access to college standard form for reporting issues relating to Child Protection.

If a member of staff has reason to have concerns over a student, they should inform the Designated Teacher, Mr Mark Callender, as soon as possible or in his absence the Deputy Designated Teacher Mrs Mary Wallace.

The Designated Teacher should notify the Principal of any concerns and if necessary together, they will decide whether or not to contact external agencies by means of the agreed procedures within the college.

## **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS**



Please Note: Where an allegation is made against a member of staff, the procedure followed will be as that on page 30 of DENI document Pastoral Care in Schools (1999): Child Protection.

### **CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER**

There is appropriate support available to children and young people who are on the child protection register, have disclosed abuse or are considered at particular risk.

### **RECORD KEEPING**

The college maintains a record of Child Abuse Complaints. This includes;

- the date and brief details of complaint
- by whom and against whom it is made
- if the complaint was formally referred, to whom it was referred and the date of referral.

- if complaint was dealt with under the college's disciplinary procedures, a brief note of the outcome.
- This record of Child Abuse Complaints is made available to the Board of Governors at each meeting.

NB: Once a student leaves Brownlow Integrated College, all paperwork from Social Services or other external agencies should be destroyed. All college documents on the students should be kept until he or she is 35 years old.

## **BULLYING**

The College's Anti-Bullying Policy outlines guidelines and procedures for dealing with bullying. Bullying at the college is not tolerated.

All members of staff should avoid using sarcasm, verbal bullying, or persistent, negative comments towards pupils and be mindful of the effects such behaviours can have.

## **USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

All staff at the college should be aware of the guidelines on the use of physical restraint regarding students. (see Appendix 3) (also see college Discipline Policy)

## **RECRUITMENT OF STAFF/VOLUNTEERS**

(see also Staff Recruitment/Selection Policy)

All staff at the college, whether paid or voluntary, are subject to a pre-employment check through the Criminal Records Office. All staff, paid and unpaid, are vetted in compliance with DE Circulars 2006/06, 2006/07, 2006/08, 2006/25 and 2008/03.

Staff must register all personal details with the college (see DENI doc. Pg92).

Volunteers should report to reception at the college at the start of each visit, and should wear a visitor's pass will be collected by office staff when a guest signs out. S

A code of conduct for volunteer helpers in contact with students is available (see Appendix 3)

## **TEACHER TRAINING**

Both the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers at the college have received training on Child Protection. They are responsible for making all staff aware of the college's Child Protection Procedures. Student Teachers, Beginning Teachers and teachers new to the college are trained on Child Protection issues as part of their induction programme. In addition, the Principal and a named Governor receive Child Protection training from the SELB.

## **PARENTAL LINKS/ COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Brownlow Integrated College believes in maintaining and developing healthy home/school links, giving parents as much opportunity as possible to become involved with college activities and to witness their child's progression.

If a case of suspected abuse is referred to the investigative agencies, the school should continue to inform parents of the educational progress of the child unless instructed otherwise by the investigative agency.

The college prospectus outlines arrangements whereby parents can make known to staff any concerns they have about the safety of their or another child.  
(see Appendix 4)

In August annually, all new parents are sent the college's leaflet "CHILD PROTECTION: A Parent's Guide" which gives information, advice and details how a concern may be related to the college.

In September annually, new parents are contacted via letter, requesting permission to use their child's photos in college publications and/or to promote the college.

## **EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN**

Laws to protect children in employment are shown in Appendix 5.

## **RELEASING INFORMATION**

It is not obligatory to release child protection information to anyone claiming they are entitled to it under the "Freedom of Information Act" or the "Data Protection Act".

## **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy should be revised every two years on consultation with Staff, Parent Council, Student Council and S.E.L.B.



## Appendix 2

### BROWNLOW INTEGRATED COLLEGE CRAIGAVON

#### Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteer Helpers in Contact with Students

and

#### Guidelines on the Use of Physical Restraint

Staff and volunteer helpers should be aware of the need to behave responsibly when in contact with children. In particular they must be aware of the danger of any form of physical contact with children of either sex which may be misinterpreted by the children or other adults, including parents. Any form of sexual exploitation of children is a serious disciplinary matter and a criminal offence. Simply touching a child can be construed as an assault. All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

Any complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the college's Disciplinary Procedure, and where required will be reported to Social Services and the Police.

To help protect themselves from baseless accusations, staff and volunteers should have regard to the following guidelines:

#### Private meetings with pupils.

Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as is possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access or with the door open.

Where possible, another pupil or preferably an adult, should be present or nearby during the interview.

- Staff should, as far as possible, avoid situations which will result in their being alone with individual children or a group of children on a regular basis.
- Volunteers should never be alone with children.
- Staff should avoid physical contact with children

- Volunteer helpers must have no physical contact at any time, except in serious emergencies such as an accident.
- From time to time situations may arise when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance such as a caring parent would give. In such circumstances staff should use their discretion to ensure that behaviour which is properly regarded as normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified. Particular care is required when such incidents arise with the same child on more than one occasion.
- Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult is present. This is particularly important if they are in any doubt as to the extent of the physical contact or exposure necessary, particularly in circumstances which could lead to misunderstanding or accusations.

## **Appendix 3**

- If any member of staff is involved in any incident (inside or outside the college) which involves lifting, holding or restraining a child, he/she should report the incident, in writing, to the principal or supervisory teacher.
- Staff should guard against children forming an attachment which may lead to relationships which the child, parents or others may misconstrue.
- Staff should ensure that their relationships with children are appropriate to the age and gender of the child, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.
- Attitudes, demeanour and language require care and thought so as not to be misinterpreted. Language and talk must be appropriate to the age group.
- Volunteer helpers should not discipline children. They may ask a child/children to follow a rule or behave in a particular way, but should the child/children disobey the instruction, a teacher should be called.
- Following any incident where a member of staff feels their actions may have been misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the designated teacher.
- Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

### **Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives of choice.

When using materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised.

If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular material, the teacher should consult with the Principle before using it.

### **Relationships and Attitudes**

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls

## Appendix 4

### **PROCEDURE FOR PARENTAL CONCERNS REGARDING THE CURRICULUM/CHILD PROTECTION ETC.**

Our College has a high level of parental involvement in our students' education. There may, however, be occasions when parents have concerns. Most of these can be resolved at an early stage in consultation with the child's teacher or the Principal.

The following procedure should be followed:

- 1 Parent contacts Class Teacher by appointment.
- 2 Parent contacts Form Teacher by appointment.
- 3 Parent can contact the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mr Mark Callender, or in his absence Mrs Mary Wallace, on any issues related to Child Protection.
- 4 Parent contacts Principal to discuss the concern.
- 5 Parent refers the matter in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.
- 6 Parent requests that the matter be considered by the SELB complaints tribunal for curriculum matters.

Formal Guidelines for Complaints and their handling are detailed in the College Policy file, available of request.

## Appendix 5

### Summary of Bye-Laws Relating to The Employment of Children Permits

No child shall be employed if he is under 13 years of age.

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13+ - 27 hours per week - if employed more than 5 days in any week.

**Saturdays and week-days other than school days** - Maximum 5 hours [one hour for meals after 3 hours continuous duty - on Saturday this is extended to 4 hours].

**Sunday** - Maximum 2 hours.

**School days** - Maximum 2 hours - only 1 hour of the 2 hours before school and this must end not later than ½ hour before school is open.

**Holidays** - an uninterrupted period of 2 weeks in July and August.

**Clothing** - if outdoors, must be suitably clad.

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15 years and over - 37 hours per week if employed more than 5 days in any week.

**Saturdays and week-days other than school days** - Maximum 7 hours [one hour for meals after 4 hours].

**Sunday** - Maximum 2 hours.

**School Days** - Maximum 2 hours - only 1 hours of the 2 hours before school and this must end at least ½ hour before school opens.

**Holidays** - an uninterrupted period of 2 weeks in July and August.

**Clothing** - if outdoors, must be suitably clad.

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#### General

**NO CHILD SHOULD BE EMPLOYED BEFORE 7.00 IN THE MORNING OR AFTER 7.00 IN THE EVENING.**