

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde National School, Ballyragget recognise that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all the school's policies, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bhríde N.S. has agreed the following child protection policy.

The Board of management has adapted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for both Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of its overall child protection policy.

Designated Liaison Person.

The Board of Management has appointed the following named people as the DLP and the Deputy DLP:

- Designated Liaison Person: Claire Dunne
- Deputy Liaison Person: Ashling Keane

The role of the DLP is to liaise with all relevant agencies, whether in seeking advice, reporting or in follow up consultations.

Definition of Child Abuse:

Child Abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

Neglect: can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific moment.

Emotional Abuse: is normally to be found in the relationship between caregiver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning.

Physical Abuse: is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Sexual Abuse: occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

Procedures in dealing with a disclosure/suspicion from a child/third party:

- Teachers who suspect child abuse should report their concerns to the DLP at the first instance and carefully record their observations over a period of time.
- Disclosures of Child Abuse from a third party will be reported to the DLP. If a third party starts to tell a teacher about an alleged child abuse incident the teacher will ask them to speak to the DLP. If the person does not inform the DLP the teacher will do so.
- Where a child discloses alleged abuse to a staff member, the person receiving that information should listen carefully and supportively. Great care must be taken not to abuse the child's trust. This should not be a formal interview.
 - Listen to the child
 - Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child
 - Offer reassurance but do not make promises
 - Do not stop a child recalling significant events
 - Do not over-react
 - Confidentiality should be assured - explain that further help may have to be sought.
 - Record the discussion accurately noting:
 - What, where and when?
 - Descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries
 - Explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate
 - Sign and date the record
 - Retain the record securely
- Whether cases of abuse are suspected or confirmed, confidentiality will be respected. The information on individual cases will be restricted to the teacher(s) immediately involved with the child and will be on a need to know basis.
- The DLP will record the incident. It is not the function of the teacher or the DLP to investigate the issue.
- If the suspected abuser is the DLP then the suspicion and any records will be passed on to the Chairperson who will proceed as per guidelines.
- Informal contact with the designated person in the Health Board will be made, seeking advice as to whether a referral should be made. The DLP will be explicit that s/he is requesting advice and not making a report. It is not necessary at this stage for the DLP to disclose his/her name or the name of the school.
- The advice given by the Health Board must be acted upon.
- If the advice is not to refer, the DLP will record this advice as the reason for non-referral.
- If the advice from the Health Board is to refer the case, the DLP will do so. However, prior to referring, the DLP will inform the parent of her intention to refer, unless this course of action is injurious to the child.
- Following referral and the completion of the standard form, the school will have no further part to play in the investigation.
- If a case conference is required, the DLP will be invited to attend.

All records will be held in a central, securely locked location.

Allegations against an employee:

- Procedures followed are similar to those of a disclosure
- Employee is made aware of the allegation against him/her
- Employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing and at a meeting of the Board of Management
- BOM meeting to review the allegation, giving due consideration to any advice given by Health Board and Gardaí
- The BOM will consider placing the employee on administrative leave, with full pay, pending the outcome of investigations by the Health Board and Gardaí.
- On conclusion of any investigation the BOM will then determine the employment status of the employee.

The following policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to Child Protection:

- **Supervision**

School supervision policy and routines will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks and during school.

- **Behaviour**

Children are to be encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

- **Visibility**

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the schoolyard. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms or sheds where they would not be under adult supervision during school hours. They are not to leave the schoolyard or to engage with adults who are outside of the schoolyard.

- **Visitors**

Teachers on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the schoolyard and will ascertain their intentions. They will be supervised in the discharge of their business. All school entrance/exit doors are locked after the children enter the school. Visitors cannot enter the school without contacting the office by using the bell (fitted at the main entrance doors) and giving their reason for entry.

- **Swimming**

Children will attend swimming under the teacher's direction. All adults assisting with supervision in the changing rooms will act in 'loco parentis' and as such will act as prudent parents helping children to return to school as dry as possible. Boys & girls will be segregated insofar as it is possible to do so in the changing rooms.

- **Children travelling in staff cars**

Teachers will not carry children alone in their cars. At least two children must travel with the teacher in the car or another adult and child.

- **Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff**

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of this policy and Children First - National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.

- **Dealing with children on a one-to-one basis**

Where possible, there will be no one-to-one teaching. If a staff member has to work/deal/communicate with children on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the door open.

- **Attendance**

With regards to child protection we will pay particular attention to trends in non-attendance. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/ physical/ emotional abuse.

In its policies, practices and activities, Scoil Naomh Bhríde N.S. will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will:

- Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations
- Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect
- Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters

Sign in/Sign out:

Scoil Naomh Bhríde N.S. has a sign in / sign out policy in place. If a child arrives late to school, is collected early, or has to leave the school during the day for any reason, their parent/guardian must record this in writing. They must record the date, time, child's name, adult name, relationship to the child and the reason. The sign in / sign out book is available to sign at the main entrance of the school.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parent's Association and is readily available to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills if requested.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year (Appendix A).

This policy was adapted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date of next review. _____