



# **Child Protection Policy**

## **Sligo School Project**

**December 2016**

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The Board of Management/Manager recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. The Board of Management/Manager has adopted and will implement fully and without modification, the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as part of this overall child protection policy.

Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skill's Child Protection procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management/Manager of Sligo School Project has agreed the following child protection policy:

In its policies, practices and activities, Sligo School Project 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; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult with a special vulnerability.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board of Management/Manager has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of all pupils.

The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection within the school.

All staff have a general duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect children from harm.

**Designated Liaison Person is Carmel Morley**  
**Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Deirdre McKeon**

The Board of Management/Manager has appointed the Principal, Carmel Morley, as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) with specific responsibility for child protection. Should circumstances warrant it, Deirdre McKeon, the deputy principal, shall act as Deputy DLP. The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection and will represent the school in all dealings with Health Boards, An Garda Síochána and other parties in connection with allegations of abuse. All matters pertaining to the processing or investigation of child abuse should be processed through the DLP

### **Role of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

The DLP acts as a liaison with outside agencies, HSE, Gardaí and other parties with child protection concerns.

The DLP will inform all school personnel of the availability of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES and Children First Guidelines in the school. S/he will circulate the DES guidelines and circulate to all staff Chapters 2 & 3 Appendix 1 of the Children First guidelines and advise on good practice

The DLP will be available to staff for consultation regarding suspicions or disclosures of abuse. S/he will keep records of these consultations.

The DLP will seek advice from the HSE.

The DLP will report suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the HSE or/and An Garda Síochána based on this advice.

The DLP will maintain proper records in a secure, confidential manner and in a secure location.

The DLP will keep up to date on current developments regarding child protection.

## **Guidelines for the DLP in handling reported concerns and disclosures**

Where the DLP/Deputy DLP have concerns about a child, but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, they should seek appropriate advice. To do this the DLP/Deputy should make informal contact with the assigned (on duty) Social Worker. The DLP/Deputy in this case, should be explicit that s/he is requesting advice and not making a report. If advised to report the matter, the DLP will act on that advice.

A report will then be made to the HSE by the DLP/Deputy in person, by telephone or in writing. In the event of an emergency or non-availability of HSE staff, the report should be made to the Gardaí. The DLP should also report the matter to the Chairperson of the BOM/Manager, who should then follow the procedures as outlined in Chapter 3 (Section 4.3) of Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2009

A standard reporting form is completed by the DLP/Deputy as comprehensively as possible (See Appendix 1, Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES).

Parents/guardians will normally be informed that a report is being made. It may be decided that informing the parent/carer is likely to endanger the child or place the child at further risk. The decision not to inform the parent/carer should be briefly recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.

When the allegation is against the DLP, the chairperson/manager then assumes responsibility for reporting the matter to the HSE and filling in the standard reporting form.

Where there are allegations or suspicions of Peer Abuse the DLP will follow the same procedures.

Parents of all parties will be notified and the DLP will inform the Chairperson.

Principal and class teachers will make arrangements to meet separately with all parents, to resolve the matter.

The school will make arrangements to minimise the possibility of the abusive behaviour recurring.

## **Procedures**

All staff (teachers, SNAs etc.) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in "Children First" and in the Department of Education and Science document "Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures".

Copies of the following guidelines are available in the school and it is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise themselves with the guidelines:

Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES, 2011

Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011.

Staff members who suspect abuse should refer to Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2009, especially  
Chapter 2 Definition & Recognition of Child Abuse,  
Chapter 3 Basis for Reporting & Standard Reporting Procedures  
Appendix 1 Signs and Symptoms Of Child Abuse.

Staff members should observe and record over time the dates, signs, symptoms, behaviour causing them concern. They should inform the DLP and pass on all records. If the reporting person or member of the school staff and the DLP is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion/allegation, the procedures for reporting as laid out in 'Children First' – Section 3.4 will be adhered to.

At each Board meeting the Principal's report shall

- a) state the number of reports made to the HSE by the DLP, since the last BoM meeting and
- b) state the number of cases, since the last Board meeting, where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made, or
- c) where there were no such cases at (a) or (b) above, state this fact.

## **Prevention**

The Stay Safe programme is the primary resource used in this school to provide education for children on abuse prevention. The programme is taught as part of the school's Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum under the strand unit "Safety and Protection".

## **Practice**

Visitors/Guests/Volunteers may be used to enhance the work being carried out by class teachers. Student teachers may occasionally carry out work experience in the school. Visitors will be approved of by the principal before coming to the school and in the case of Transition Year and third level students, the principal will liaise with the co-ordinator of their course.

Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs- The needs of children with specific toileting or intimate care needs will be discussed on an individual basis between the child's parents, class teacher, SNA and principal. Procedures which are deemed necessary will be agreed upon and recorded.

Toileting accidents- Pupils will be provided with clean clothing. Where pupils need assistance with changing/cleaning themselves care will be taken at all times to ensure that the well-being and dignity of the child is maintained.

Changing for games/PE/swimming. For activities which require the pupils to change they can change in the school toilets or in a changing room (e.g. the swimming pool), two staff members will be present if possible.

## **Recruitment and selection of staff**

Teachers who have qualified since 2006 have received Garda vetting through the Teaching Council. Teachers who qualified prior to 2006 and SNAs will obtain and provide to the principal proof of Garda vetting. All other personnel/volunteers working on their own with the pupils will also obtain and provide proof of Garda vetting to the principal. Further to the commencement of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to 2016, all relevant parties who are recruited/selected will be vetted appropriately.

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

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management/Manager once in every school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management/Manager on

11<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Signed

Anna Kenny  
Manager

Carmel Morley  
Principal

Date: 11/01/2017

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Date of next review: January 2018