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# Child Protection Policy

# Child Protection Policy

Our School's Child Protection Policy has been drawn up to ensure that all members of our school community are aware of the procedures to be followed in cases of suspicions, allegations or disclosures of child abuse and how such will be handled by our school. In drawing up this policy, the school has adopted the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for primary and Post primary schools. It builds on our previous policy in this area and takes account of the provisions of legislation enacted recently – The Education Act 1998 and The Child Welfare Act 2000

## References

In drawing up the policy the school has relied on the following publications – “*Children First*” – *National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011), “*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*” – (Department of Education & Science 2011)

## School Ethos

Our school strives to help all our children grow in a happy caring environment and thus develop into healthy, confident, mature adults, capable of realising their full potential as human beings. We strive at all times to create a safe environment where the children feel secure, knowing that if they have concerns, they will be listened to with understanding and respect.

## Aims of this Policy

- To raise awareness of child abuse among all our school community and education partners namely emotional, physical, sexual and neglect. (Including Teachers, SNAs, Caretaker, Secretary, School Warden, Parents, Board Members etc.).
- To put in place clear procedures for all school personnel dealing with suspicions, allegations or incidences of child abuse.
- To identify other policy areas, which may need to be amended in light of the Child Protection Guidelines.
- To identify curricular content and resources that contribute to the prevention of child abuse.

## Guidelines (Guidelines are quoted in full in Appendix A, B, C, D)

As well as impinging on the Roles of certain members of Staff and the BOM, these guidelines also affect school organization and have consequences for Curriculum development and implementation.

This policy and guidelines are laid out as follows:

- **Designated Liaison (DLP) (Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLPP)):** Appointment
- **Board of Management (BOM):** Role, Responsibilities and Guidelines (*Appendix A*)
- **Designated Liaison Person (Deputy Designated Liaison):** Role, Responsibilities and Guidelines (*Appendix B*)
- **Staff Members:** Roles, Responsibilities and Guidelines (*Appendix C*)
- **Case Conferences** (*Appendix C*)
- **School Organization:** Implications (*Appendix D*)
- **Curriculum:** Implications (*Appendix D*)
- **Forms for Reporting** (*Appendix E*)

## **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

The Principal will act as DLP following appointment by the Board of Management. Should circumstances warrant it, the Deputy Principal shall act as DDLP. The DLP and DDLP will be nominated by each BOM at the first meeting after its election.

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 claims of child abuse will be conducted through the DLP. A full description of responsibilities attaching to this position is outlined below. Further information on the responsibilities of the DLP is included in 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, DES' - Pg 18- Section 3.2. Action to be taken by the DLP in cases where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion or where an allegation has been made are in 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, DES' Chapter 4 - Section 4.2 pg 23 - 24

## **Confidentiality**

In the interest of the child, all information regarding concerns of possible child abuse will only be shared on a “need to know” basis with persons who have a legitimate involvement or role in dealing with the issue.

Giving information to those who need to have that information for the protection of a child who may have been or has been abused, is not a breach of confidentiality.

The DLP who is submitting a report to the Health Board or An Garda Síochána will inform a parent/guardian unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place that child at further risk. A decision not to inform a parent/guardian should be briefly recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.

In emergency situations, where the Health Board cannot be contacted, and the child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, An Garda Síochána will be contacted immediately.

A child will not be left in a dangerous situation pending Health Board intervention.

## **Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse**

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, provides immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated suitors of Health Boards or any member of An Garda Síochána.

This means that even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the replier had not acted reasonably and in good faith making the report.

The act provides significant protection for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including dismissal. (Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011 p.10)

## Qualified Privilege

While the legal protection outlined above only applies to reports made to the appropriate authorities (i.e. The Health Boards and An Garda Síochána), Common Law qualified privilege continues to apply as heretofore. Consequently, should a Board of Management member or a member of school personnel furnish information with regard to suspicions of child abuse to the DLP or the Board of Management Chairperson, such communication would be regarded under common law as having qualified privilege.

A further definition of qualified privilege is outlined in Section 1.11.1 and 1.11.2, page 11 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011.

## Freedom of Information Act 1997 & 2003

Reports made to Health Boards may be subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, which enable members of the public to obtain access to personal information relating to them which is in the possession of public bodies. However, the act also provides that public bodies may refuse access to information obtained by them in confidence. (CPP p.11)

## Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

- **Neglect** – where a child’s need for food, warmth, shelter, nurturance and safety are not provided to the extent that the child suffers significant harm including abandonment or desertion, malnourishment, persistent failure to attend school, recurring medical problems left untreated.
- **Emotional Abuse** – where a child’s needs for affection, approval and security are not being met and have not been met for some time by parent or carer. This can take place between peer groups also.
- **Physical Abuse** – where a child is assaulted or injured in some way that is deliberate – i.e. bruises, fractures, burns, lacerations, damaged organs and failure to thrive. This is the easiest form of abuse to observe
- **Sexual Abuse** –
  - a) Non contact (offensive sexual remarks, obscene phone calls or text messages, exposure, vulgarism
  - b) Contact – touching
  - c) Oral-genital
  - d) Penetrative
  - e) Sexual exploitationThese are usually the hardest form to observe.

A child may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time. Definitions for each form of abuse are outlined in CPP p.13 - 17.

## Guidelines for Recognition of Child Abuse

A list of child abuse indicators is contained in Appendix 1 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011' - Pg 70 -74. It is also available in Appendix 3 of CPP.

It is important to stress that, no one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse; it may indicate conditions other than child abuse. All signs and symptoms must be examined in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances.

There are usually three stages in the identification of child abuse:

- i. Considering the possibility
- ii. Looking out for signs of abuse
- iii. Recording of information.

Each of these stages is developed in 'Children First 2011' Pg 10 -11 Section 2.7

## **Dealing with Disclosures from Children**

'Child Protection Procedures 2011' - Pg 20 Section 3.5 gives comprehensive details of how disclosures should be approached.

When information is offered in confidence the member of staff will need tact and sensitivity. The member of staff will reassure the child, and retain the child's trust, while explaining the need for action and the possible consequences, which will necessarily involve other adults being informed. It is important to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support them but no promises should be made that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anyone else.

The following advice is offered to school personnel to whom a child makes a disclosure of abuse.

- Listen to the child
- Take all disclosures seriously
- Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child
- No judgmental statement may be made about the person against whom the allegation is made
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises.
- Do not stop a child recalling significant events
- Do not over react
- The child should be given some indication of what will happen next
- Record the discussion accurately, using, as far as possible, the child's own words, and retain the record

This information should then be passed onto the DLP. All records are regarded as highly confidential and placed in a secure location by the DLP

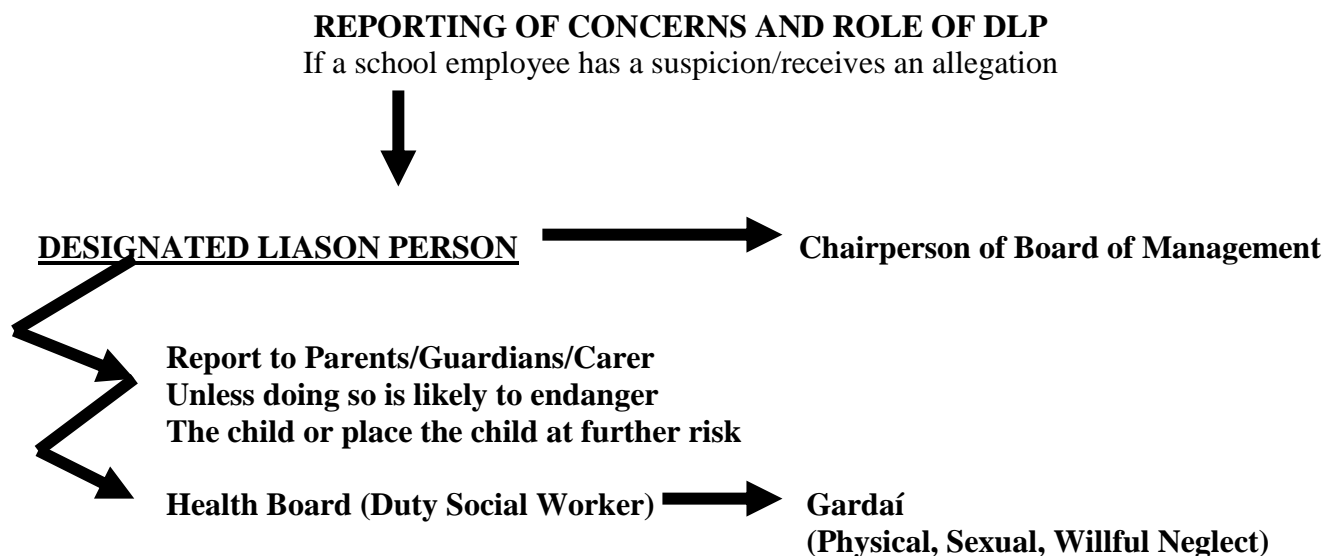
If the reporting person or member of the school staff and the DLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion/allegation, the procedures for reporting as laid out in 'Children First' - Section 4.4 pg 38 will be adhered to. Standardised reporting forms may be photocopied from CPP 2011 [Appendix 4](#)

The DLP shall immediately, or as soon as possible thereafter, inform the Board of Management that a report involving a child in the school has been submitted to the HSE. In the interest of protecting the anonymity of the child, no details of the report should be disclosed to the Board of Management unless there are issues which need to be addressed directly by the Board of Management.

Any professional who suspects child abuse should inform parents/carers if a report is to be submitted to the Health Board or An Garda Síochána unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

Where the HSE advises that a report should not be made, the DLP shall inform the Board of Management of this fact. Once again, in the interest of protecting the anonymity of the child, no details of the case should be disclosed to the Board of Management unless there are issues which need to be addressed directly by the Board of Management. Any information or details that might identify a child should not be recorded in the minutes of Board of Management meetings

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and a duty social worker is unavailable, Garda Síochána should be contacted. Under no circumstances will a child be left in a dangerous situation pending Health Board intervention.



#### 4.3 Principal's report to the Board of Management

At each Board of Management meeting the principal's report shall:

- (a) state the number of reports made to the HSE by the DLP, since the last Board of Management 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.

#### Allegations or Suspicions re: School Employees

The most important consideration for the Chairperson, Board of Management or the DLP is the safety and protection of the child. However, employees also have a right to protection against claims, which are false or malicious.

As employers, the Board of Management should always seek legal advice as the circumstances can vary from one case to another.

There are two procedures to be followed (Section 5.1.4 Page 30'Child Protection Procedures 2011')

- i. The reporting procedure
- ii. The procedure for dealing with the Employee.

The DLP has responsibility for reporting the matter to the Health Board. The Chairperson, Board of Management has responsibility, acting in consultation with the Board, for addressing the employment issues.

If the allegation is against the DLP, the Board of Management Chairperson will assume the responsibility for reporting the matter to the Health Board.

In this context, employees also include unpaid volunteers.

The most important consideration to be taken into account is the protection of children, and their safety and well-being must be the priority.

## **Reporting**

When an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee, the DLP should immediately act in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 4.2, Child Protection Procedures 2011.

A written statement of the allegation should be sought from the person/agency making the report. The DLP should always inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

School employees, other than the DLP, who receive allegations against another school employee, should immediately report the matter to the DLP. School employees who form suspicions regarding conduct of another school employee should consult with the DLP. The procedures outlined in Section 4.1 - 'Child Protection Procedures 2011 will then be followed.

The employee, together with the Chairperson and DLP should make the employee aware privately

- a) An allegation has been made against him/her
- b) The nature of the allegation
- c) Whether or not the Health Board or Gardai have/will be/must be/should be informed.

The employee should be given a copy of the written allegation and any other relevant documentation. The employee should be requested to respond to the allegation in writing to the Board of Management within a specified period and told that this may be passed to the Gardai, Health Board, and legal advisers.

The priority in all cases is that no child be exposed to unnecessary risk. Therefore, as a matter of urgency, the Chairperson should take any necessary protective measures. These measure should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee in any way unless to protect the child.

If the nature of the allegations warrants immediate action in the Chairperson's opinion, the Board of Management should be convened to consider the matter. This may result in the Board of Management directing that the employee absent him/herself from the school forthwith while the matter is being investigated (administrative leave).

When the Board of Management is unsure as to whether this should occur, advice should be sought from the Gardai and/or the Child Care Manager of the Health Board and the legal advisers to the Board of Management and regard be had to this advice.

## **Administrative Leave**

Should the Board of Management direct that the employee absent him/herself as above, such absence of the employee would be regarded as administrative leave of absence with pay and not suspension and would not imply any degree of guilt. The DES should be immediately informed. (Child Protection Procedures 2011 p.33)

## **Board of Management**

The Chairperson should inform the Board of Management of all the details and remind the members of their serious responsibility to maintain strict confidentiality on all matters relating to the issue and the principles of due process and natural justice.

## **Curriculum**

The full implementation of the SPHE programme in our school, particularly the Stay Safe programme, will help with the essential protection of the children in our care and the protection of staff.

Further in-service may be available from time to time for the implementation of the RSE and Child Abuse Prevention Programmes and will be availed of by the school.

Furthermore information seminars will be arranged with a duty social worker so that the full Child Protection Policy and Programme can be explored. These meetings will be held as often as is felt necessary but at least every 4 years.

## **Evaluation of Policy**

We will evaluate the success of this policy using the following criteria

- Delivery and participation by all staff in training
- Delivery of the SPHE curriculum,
- Resources to support the delivery of SPHE \*
- Delivery and participation by children in the “**Stay Safe**” Programme
- Assessment of these procedures by participants following a child protection case.
- Feedback from all staff.

## **Timeframe for Implementation**

These procedures will be implemented following ratification by the BOM.

## **Review**

At the first staff meeting of every year the DLP will remind all teachers of the guidelines and copies of the Policy will be given to each staff member.

A review will be conducted at least every two years and based on the criteria above, following any and all incidents when the guidelines are used.

## **Responsibility for Review**

The Postholder with responsibility for review will log dates for review and the review will be conducted by

- DLP/Principal
- All Staff



**Ratification and Communication**

This policy was ratified on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012. It will be reviewed in October 2013.

As with all policies, parents are notified of their existence and are invited to review and comment on the policy, which is available from the office or on the school website.

- **Appendix A: Board of Management: Role, Responsibilities and Guidelines**

### **Board of Management: Role, Responsibilities and Guidelines:**

- The Board of Management has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their pupils.
- The DLP has specific responsibility in the area of child protection in the school.
- All staff have a general duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect children from harm.
- The role of the Role of the Board of Management is
  - (i) To plan, develop and implement an effective child protection programme.
  - (ii) To monitor and evaluate its effectiveness.
  - (iii) To provide for appropriate staff development and training.

#### **Specifically the Board will**

- Appoint a DLP and DDLP.
- Have clear procedures for dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse (see below)
- Monitor the progress of children at risk.
- Ensure that curricular provision is in place for the prevention of child abuse.
- Ensure that training is available for all staff members.
- Investigate and respond to allegations of child abuse against one of the school's employees.
- Decide on teachers' attendance at case conferences and to advise teachers before attending such conferences.

#### **Procedures for BOM in all cases of allegations or suspicions of child abuse by a person outside the school**

The DLP will deal with such matters and report to BOM as outlined previously.

#### **Procedures for BOM in all cases of allegations or suspicions of child abuse by a school employee:**

##### **Reporting**

- In the event of receiving a complaint or suspicion re an employee The DLP will immediately inform the Chairperson.
- He will seek a written statement of the allegation from the person/agency making the allegation. Parents/Guardians may make a statement on behalf of a child.
- The DLP will seek advice from the relevant Health Board and will take responsibility for reporting, based on this advice.
- If the DLP, following consultation with the Health Board, decides that this matter does not warrant reporting, he must inform the Chairperson. They must then inform, in writing, the person or agency making the allegation, of the reasons for this decision. If this person or agency still has concerns, they are free to consult with or report to the relevant Health Board or Gardai on an individual basis. The provisions of the "Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998" apply, once they report reasonably and in good faith.

- If the DLP, following consultation with the Health Board, decides that this matter warrants reporting he/she should inform the Chairperson, who should proceed in accordance with the procedures in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools
- The DLP completes a standard reporting form as comprehensively as is possible.
- When the Chairperson becomes aware of an allegation of abuse s/he will always seek legal advice and base his/her response on this advice.
- S/He will privately inform the employee of the fact and nature of the allegation and whether or not it has been reported by the DLP to the Health Board (pg.32 of Child Protection Procedures 2011 DES).
- The Chairperson has a duty to afford the employee fairness and due process – s/he is entitled to details and a copy of the written allegation, to advice and representation and an opportunity to respond to the Board within a week.

## **Responding**

- When the Chairperson becomes aware of an allegation of abuse he/she will always seek legal advice and base his/her response on this advice.
- The Chairperson will consider whether there is any risk to pupils' safety. If the Chairperson considers that there is a risk - he/she may require the employee to take immediate administrative leave. If unsure, the Chairperson will consult with the Health Board/Gardai.
- If administrative leave has been invoked the Chairperson will inform the DES, The Health Board (in some cases the Gardai) may also be notified in accordance with legal advice received.
- Once it is deemed necessary by the DLP and Chairperson to make a report (after receiving advice from the Health Board) the Chairperson will convene and inform a meeting of the BOM as soon as possible.
- Where the alleged abuse has taken place within the school, or relates to the abuse of pupils of the school by school employees outside of school time, the BOM will investigate the matter. They will convene a further meeting, once the relevant information has been gathered. At this meeting the BOM will consider in detail
  - (i) the allegations made and their source,
  - (ii) the advice given by relevant authorities and
  - (iii) the written responses of the employee.
- At this meeting the person/agency who is alleging abuse by the school employee should be offered an opportunity to present his/her case to the BOM and may be accompanied by another person.
- Parents/guardians may act on behalf of child.
- The employee should also be afforded an opportunity to present their case and may also be accompanied.
- The BOM must deal with the matter sensitively and the employee must be fairly treated.

- The BOM will make a decision on action, if any, based on the investigation, and will inform the employee of this in writing. They will also inform the DES of the outcome, if the employee has been absent on administrative leave.
- Where it is not possible for the BOM to conduct an enquiry into allegations (e.g. where abuse has occurred in past employment, or where the employee is undergoing investigation by relevant authorities), the Chairperson will act on advice of authorities. The Chairperson will maintain close contact with the Health Board and receive reports and records from them where appropriate.

**Designated Liaison Person: Role, Responsibilities and Guidelines**

- The DLP acts as a liaison with outside agencies, Health Boards, Gardai and other parties with child protection concerns.
- The DLP will inform all personnel of the availability of the Children First Guidelines in the school. He/she will photocopy and circulate to all staff members The School's Child Protection Policy and chapters 2 and 3 and Appendix 3 of the Child Protection Procedures 2011 and advise on good practice.
- The DLP will be available to staff for consultation regarding suspicions or disclosures of abuse. Records of these consultations will be kept.
- Where appropriate, The DLP will seek advice from the Health Board.
- The DLP will report suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the Health Board or/ and Gardaí 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/DDLP have concerns about a child, but are not sure whether to report the matter to the Health Board they should seek appropriate advice. To do this the DLP/DDLP should make contact with the assigned (on duty) Social Worker. The DLP/DDLP in this case, should be explicit that it is advice that is being sought and not making a report. If advised to report the matter, the DLP/DDLP will act on that advice.
- A report will then be made to the Health Board by the DLP/D in person, by telephone or in writing. In the event of an emergency or non-availability of Health Board staff, the report should be made to the Gardaí. The matter should also be reported to the Chairperson of the BOM who should then follow the procedures as outlined in Chapter 4.3 of Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (1999).
- A standard reporting form is completed by the DLP/DDLP as comprehensively as possible. (See Appendix 4 – CPPP 2011)).
- 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 further. The decision not to inform the parent/carer should be briefly recorded and the reasons for not doing so.
- When the allegation is against the DLP; the Chairperson then assumes responsibility for reporting the matter to the Health Board and filling in the standard reporting form.
- Where there are allegations or suspicions of Peer Abuse the DLP will follow the same procedures.
- The DLP will inform the Chairperson.
- Principal and/or class teachers will make arrangements to meet separately with each child's parents to resolve the matter.
- The school will make arrangements to minimise the possibility of the abusive behaviour recurring.

## **Staff Member: Role, Responsibilities and Guidelines**

### **Role of the Staff Member (to include all members of Staff)**

- It is the responsibility of all teachers and staff members to familiarise themselves with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011, especially
  - (i) Chapter 2: Definition & Recognition of Child Abuse
  - (ii) Chapter 3: Responsibilities of all School Personnel
  - (iv) Appendix 3: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

### **Guidelines for all staff members in handling disclosures from children**

- 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. The following advice is offered:
- 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 not be assured - explain that further help may have to be sought.
- Record the discussion accurately noting
  - i) What, where and when?
  - ii) Descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries
  - iii) Explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate.
  - iv) Retain the record securely.
- The staff member should obtain only necessary relevant facts. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to investigate allegations of abuse.
- The DLP should then be informed and given relevant records.
- 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.

### **Guidelines for teachers and staff members in handling suspicions of abuse**

- Staff members who suspect abuse should refer to Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011 especially
  - (i) Chapter 2: definition & Recognition of Child Abuse
  - (ii) Chapter 3: Responsibilities of all School Personnel
  - (iii) Appendix 3: 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

### **Case Conference**

- A request is made from the Health Board through the D.L.P. who should consult with the Chairperson of the B.O.M. of the school. The Chairperson may seek clarification through the D.L.P. as to why the attendance of the school employee is necessary and ascertain who else will be present.
- The school employee may complete a report for the conference. (Appendix 4 CPPP 2011).
- The school employee will be advised if children/parents/guardians are going to be present. The school employee may contact the Chairperson of the Child Protection Conference for advice.
- The school employee may keep a child's behaviour under closer observation if requested to do so. This may include observing the child's behaviour, peer interactions, school progress or informal conversations.
- In all cases individuals who refer or discuss their concerns about the care and protection of children with Health Board Staff, should be informed of the likely steps to be taken by the professionals involved. Where appropriate and within the limits of confidentiality, reporting staff will be kept informed about the outcomes of any enquiry or investigation, following on from their report.

## **Appendix D: Implications for school organisation, staff training, and curriculum development and implementation.**

### **Implications for school organisation, staff training, and curriculum development and implementation.**

#### **School Organisation:**

School procedures already in place and new procedures being put in place will be examined with reference to the Children First Guidelines and any Child Protection issues that may arise will be addressed.

The following policies have been addressed in this review

#### **Bullying**

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying Code. If the behaviour involved is of a sexual nature or regarded as being particularly abusive then the matter will be referred to the DLP. All classes from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> will have internet safety and cyber bullying included as part of their SPHE curriculum. Lessons are sourced from Webwise, and are age appropriate to the children. Parents are also advised to keep an eye on their children's mobile phone and internet activity, particularly social media sites.

#### **Supervision**

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

#### **Behaviour**

Children will 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 sexual 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 inappropriate time in classrooms or toilets where they would not be under adult supervision. They will not leave the schoolyard to engage with adults who are outside the schoolyard

#### **Visitors**

Teachers on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the schoolyard and will ascertain their intentions. Where possible they will be supervised in the discharge of their business by caretaker, secretary or post holder.

#### **Accidents**

While every precaution will be taken under our Health and Safety Statement to ensure the safety of children, we realise that accidents will happen. Accidents will be noted in our Incident book and will be addressed under our accident policy as part of Health and Safety.

#### **Environmental and Other Trips. – (minimum one teacher and two adults – JC)**

A minimum of one teacher and two other adults (to bring to maximum of 10:1 Pupil: Adult ratio) will accompany children at all times on out of school activities. SNAs are not included in this ratio as they have responsibility to a particular child. All adults will act in "in-loco-parentis" and as such will act as prudent parents in helping children. Parents and volunteers are required to have Garda vetting in place. (Refer to our school's Environmental Trips Policy and Tours Policy)



### **Children travelling in staff cars**

Teachers will not carry children alone in their cars at any time.

### **Children working or talking in one to one with teacher:**

Teachers will ensure that they are in a visible position at all times and where necessary doors will be kept open to ensure access from outside environment.

### **Garda Vetting**

It is required that all volunteers and parents involved in school activities are garda vetted. Parents are asked to start this process in motion at the information evening in March prior to their children starting school.

### **Record Keeping**

Teachers will keep each child's file updated with results of assessments carried out, dates and details of meetings with parents and notes from parents. The records will be stored in a locked drawer of each teacher's desk. Roll books will be updated daily. Sensitive information regarding children will be shared on a need-to-know basis. All educational files of pupils who no longer attend this school are kept in the filing cabinet in the principal's office for 5 years. Further details on record keeping are found in the school's Record Keeping Policy.

### **Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff**

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Children First Guidelines (2011) and Child protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools. The DLP will give a copy of Chapters 3 & 4 and Appendix 1 and this Child Protection Policy to all new staff. All new teachers are expected to teach the objectives in the SPHE programme, in particular the Stay Safe programme. The Principal and Deputy Principal are responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and a Special Duties Teacher will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives. The Deputy Principal is also responsible for ensuring that new teachers know how to fill in the roll book correctly and informing the teacher of record keeping procedures within the school.

### **Induction of Pupils**

All parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act. All parents will be informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development eg. RSE, **“Walk Tall”**, **Stay Safe** and SPHE. Our school enrolment application form indicates that a copy of our enrolment policy and discipline policy is available to all parents and these outline the procedures parents, and children should use when contacting the school if there are absences or concerns of an educational/ personal/family matter. Parents will be reminded of these from time to time in our School News. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress. All parents are given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies

### **Communication**

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil/teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral English/RE programmes allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which is hoped will aid the pupil-teacher relationship. If teachers have to communicate with pupils on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open. Further details on communication are found in the school's Communication Policy.

### **Attendance**

Our school attendance will be monitored as per our attendance policy. 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.

## **School Curriculum: Implications**

### **Introduction**

In our school all children will be cherished and in fulfilling the general aims of the Revised Primary Curriculum we will:

- Enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential
- Enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society.
- Prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

In endeavouring to realise these aims we will create a positive school climate which is open, inclusive, respectful, fair, democratic and tolerant and which seeks to support the holistic development of all children and all adults working with our children. The strategies we will use to create this environment are detailed in our SPHE Plan and will involve:

- Creating a health-promoting physical environment
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Fostering respect for diversity
- Building effective communication within the school
- Developing appropriate home/school communication
- Catering for individual needs
- Developing democratic process
- Fostering inclusive and respectful language

Our school will be physically and emotionally safe and we will deliver the curricular content of our SPHE programme with a view to giving our children the protective skills of self-esteem and assertiveness. The circle time methodology will be used on a whole school basis and bubble time also. Peer mediation is available to children to help resolve conflict. The No-Blame approach will be adopted in our anti-bullying policy. Co-operative interpersonal skills will be developed through working in pairs and working in groups. Older children will be encouraged to work positively with conflict and negotiation and consensus-building- skills will be developed.

### **Junior and Senior Infants**

Infant teachers will teach content objectives as laid out under the 10 strand units in our SPHE programme. They are

- Self Identity
- Taking care of my body.
- Growing and changing.
- Safety and protection.
- Making decisions \*
- Myself and my family
- My friends and other people \*
- Relating to others \*
- Developing citizenship

These strand units will enable children to develop assertiveness, body integrity, skills relating to self-care, respect for others, identification of feelings and skills necessary to recognise and tell of abuse.

The SPHE programme will be supported, using the “**Walk Tall**” resources, our Alive- O programme and “**Stay Safe**” resources.

### **1st & 2nd classes**

In implementing our SPHE programme as laid out under the 10 strand units named above we will enable the children to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes pertaining to self-esteem, esteem for others and the environment and skills pertaining to self-care and disclosure. Healthy eating, positive attitudes to drug use and anti-bully awareness will be introduced.

The SPHE programme will be supported by using the “**Walk Tall**” resources, our “**Alive O**” programme, North Western Health Board materials and “**Stay Safe**” programme.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> classes**

Our SPHE programme will again be implemented according to the 10 strand units. Knowledge, skills and attitudes developed in previous classes will be built on. Children will be enabled to develop intra-personal skills and inter-personal skills. As children mature they will be challenged to develop their decision-making skills. They will develop self-protection skills pertaining to smoking and alcohol. Peer pressure and the influence of the media will also be examined.

The development of self-esteem, esteem for others, assertiveness, awareness feelings, and skills around self-protection and disclosure will underpin our teaching.

Our SPHE programme will be supported by the use of “**Walk Tall**” resources, Prim-ed anti-bullying materials, RSE materials and “**Stay Safe**” programme.

### **5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> classes**

Our SPHE programme will be implemented according to the curricular objectives as laid out under the 10 strands in the Revised Primary Curriculum. Skills, knowledge and attitudes developed in earlier classes will be enhanced. Children will continue to develop self-awareness and positive attitudes to themselves, others, their environment and wider world in which they live.

Self protection and respect for others will be fostered, decision-making skills developed, peer influence and media bias examined. Knowledge of drugs and positive attitudes to drug use will be further developed. Children will be enabled to develop good group-building skills, anti-bullying awareness and conflict resolution skills. A peer mediation training programme is available to our senior cycle children. Self- protection will be emphasised and protection of younger, less able people. Positive attitudes to sexuality will be developed and respect for self and others fostered. (see RSE policy).

The SPHE programme will be supported by the use of the “**Walk Tall**” materials, RSE resources, “**Stay Safe**” resources and North-Western Health board resources.