

**EOIN BAISDE CAILÍNÍ NAOIDH
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
INFANT GIRLS' SCHOOL**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Scoil Eoin Baisde Cailíní Naoidh

St John the Baptist Infant Girls' School

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Board of Management of St John the Baptist Infant Girls' School recognise that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and will be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. The Board has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures as part of its overall Child Protection Policy. **The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in the school is the Principal, Patricia O'Donoghue. It is to her that any concern must be initially reported in relation to abuse of any form. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is the Deputy Principal, Máire Duffy.** The Board will ensure that all school policies and protocols relevant to child protection are in place. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management and will be made available to school personnel, the Parents' Association and all parents.

The Board of Management of Scoil Eoin Baisde Cailíní Naoidh has adopted the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools. These documents underpin and inform the content of this policy, following its revision in November 2012. These documents are available in the Principal's office and online at www.education.ie and www.dcy.ie

Content

The booklet "Children First" states that the protection and welfare of the child is of top priority. If there is a matter of concern in relation to the abuse of children, we are obliged to report this to the relevant Area HSE. Early intervention may reduce the risk of serious harm occurring to the child in the future. The HSE will assess the case and provide the necessary support for the child concerned.

The booklet "Children First" outlines child abuse in four categories:

- (a) Neglect
- (b) Emotional Abuse
- (c) Physical Abuse
- (d) Sexual Abuse

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- (1) A specific indication from a child that she was abused.
- (2) A statement from a person who witnessed abuse.
- (3) An illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.
- (4) A symptom which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence.
- (5) Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

Recording Concerns

Each staff member will be issued with a “Guidelines Checklist” which is appended to this policy. Staff members who have concerns must report to the DLP. The DLP may ask the staff member to put their concerns in writing if it is necessary to make a referral to the HSE. The DLP will advise other staff on a “need to know” basis, at all times protecting the child. We monitor the progress of pupils about whom we have concerns and who may be at risk in a manner consistent with our duties as teachers.

All records relating to specific child protection issues will be stored in a secure filing system. Only those persons who need to have access to these records because of their role in relation to child protection will have access to this system i.e. the DLP and in her absence, the Deputy DLP.

Records are maintained confidentially and in a factual manner. Below is a guideline for recording concerned observations:-

- ❖ Registration number of pupil (name not to be recorded)
- ❖ Date
- ❖ Observation
- ❖ Signature

Reporting Procedures

If the person making the report and the DLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation of abuse, the DLP will report the matter to the HSE as soon as possible. This report should be made on the standard form (which can be found in the Child Protection file in the Principal’s office). The DLP should also speak to the relevant person in the HSE, either in person, or by phone.

The HSE should be in a position to advise the DLP concerning the child in question. The initial enquiry should be general in nature and NOT disclose the name of the child. A record of the date, time and name of Social Worker spoken to, should be kept.

The DLP may also consult the HSE for advice regarding concerns for a child, even if not at that stage making an official report.

The Chairperson of the BOM will be informed if a report is being made to the HSE. The issue of child protection will be on the agenda of all BOM meetings. The Principal’s report to the BOM will always include a report on child protection. This will cover the number of reports made to the HSE or where advice was sought on child protection from the HSE. No identifying details will be included in the report. The minutes will record these reports.

In the case of a report being made in an emergency situation and the HSE staff were unavailable, the report should be made to the Gardaí.

The DLP should inform the child’s parents or guardian if a report is being made, unless, to do so, would endanger the child or put him/her further at risk. Where there has been a child protection report made to the HSE, the HSE will be informed if that child transfers to another school.

Confidentiality

It is extremely important that all information be treated in strictest confidence by all those involved in a report. All information regarding the case of possible child abuse should only be shared on a “need-to-know” basis in the interests of the child. Any record of child protection concerns or referrals will be kept in the filing cabinet in the Principal’s office (see page 16 of “Children First”). The guidelines on confidentiality will be adhered to by all those involved.

Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse by School Employees

This is a matter for the Board of Management as it is the employer. Legal advice should always be sought in these cases. Strict confidentiality must be maintained. In general the same person shall not have responsibility for dealing with the reporting issue and the employment issue. The DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to the HSE and the Chairperson is responsible for addressing the employment issues. However, where the allegation/suspicion relates to the DLP, the Chairperson shall assume the responsibility for seeking advice from and /or for reporting the matter to the HSE, as appropriate.

Adult Volunteers in School

As stated in our SPHE and RSE Policies, no adult volunteer will be left unsupervised with a child or group of children. The teacher will remain with the children during any visit from other adults.

One-to-One Teaching

Where a child is taught on a one-to-one basis (e.g. English as a second language/learning support/resource teaching) it is preferable if another child accompanies her. If this is not practicable, the teacher should ensure that the pupil is visible at all times through an unscreened window or by leaving a door open.

Vetting of New Staff

In the case of new appointment to the teaching and non-teaching staff, the Board of Management must ensure compliance with the Department of Education and Skills requirements (currently outlined in Circular 0063/2010).

All persons being appointed to teaching or non-teaching positions of any duration must be vetted prior to commencing employment unless they have already been vetted during the same or previous calendar year.

Every effort must be made to complete the vetting process in advance of appointments being made. However, if this is not possible (for reasons outside the control of the school authority) then the prospective employee must confirm acceptance in writing that his/her appointment is subject to the satisfactory outcome of the vetting process.

As an additional safeguard, the child protection related Statutory Declaration at Appendix 2 must be provided by all persons being appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions of any duration.

Information for Teaching Staff

All staff have been made familiar with this document and have been supplied with copies of Chapter 3 of the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children” which details the responsibilities of school personnel. They have also been supplied with a copy of the following sections of the “Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.”

Chapter 2: Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Appendix 1: Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Children with Special Needs

If any pupil in the school requires personal private care, procedures involved in such care will be agreed in consultation with the pupil, her parents/guardians and any other personnel involved in the care of the pupil. This will be done in keeping with best practice and the best interests of the child and with due consideration to maintaining the child’s personal dignity. Such procedures, when agreed, will be communicated to those parties involved and put on record.

Stay Safe Programme

The Stay Safe programme is fully implemented in this school as part of the SPHE programme. Although there is not yet a programme aimed at Junior Infants, the teachers in that stream adapt the lessons from the Senior Infants programme in line with the age and experience of their classes. In line with the SPHE plan in the school, ‘Safety and Protection’ is taught under the strand unit ‘Self-Identity’. This topic is well covered in the Stay Safe programme and it is also addressed in other programmes e.g. RSE Junior Infant lessons, ‘People Who Teach Us about Keeping Safe’. In this programme, children are taught specifically to identify unsafe feelings, and to ask an adult for help, if necessary. Physical abuse is addressed by teaching children that they can tell about any touch that makes them feel unsafe. In relation to sexual abuse, children are taught safety strategies to deal with inappropriate touches. The main lesson of the Stay Safe Programme for all children who find themselves in an unsafe situation is “Say no, get away. Tell an adult you trust”. Keep telling until someone listens to you.

References

Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures (DES 2001)

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011

Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Circular 0065/2011 Department of Education and Skills

Catholic Primary Schools Management Association Handbook 2012.

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: 2 February 2016.

Signed: *Paul Nolan*
PAUL NOLAN
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *Patricia O’Donoghue*
PATRICIA O’DONOGHUE
Principal Teacher

Date: 2 February 2016

Date: 2 February 2016

Date of Next Review: 2017