



Scoil Chlíodhna CNS



**Scoil Chlíodhna Community National School (CNS),
Carrigtwohill GAA, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork.**

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

This document is a response to recent changes in legislation and takes account of the provisions of each of the following pieces of legislation;

- Freedom of Information Act, 1997
- The Education Act, 1998
- The Child Welfare Act, 2000
- Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (the new procedures are based on this document).

Scoil Chlíodhna Community National School (CNS) recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practises and activities. In accordance with the requirements of the Department Of Education Skills *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* (2011), Scoil Chlíodhna CNS in consultation with the staff members, parents and management of our school has agreed on the following child protection policy.

This policy, the '*Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures*' (DES, 2011), the '*Children First*' document (Dept. Of Children, 2011) and detailed guidelines and procedures for handling disclosures are available to all staff members on the school website and in the staff library. It is incumbent on all staff members to familiarise themselves with all of these documents and guidelines.

Scoil Chlíodhna CNS 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.

Aims

- To create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment for all pupils.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of what action to take when dealing with a child protection issue.
- To develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community.
- To put in practice procedures to protect all pupils and staff.
- To ensure that all staff members are aware of and familiar with the '*Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures*' (DES, 2011) and '*Children First*' (Dept. Of Children, 2011) guidelines in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosures of child abuse.
- To provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all school staff.

In its policies, practises and activities Scoil Chlíodhna CNS 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

School Measures Taken to Protect the Children in Our Care:

We believe that all children have the right to be safe in our society and that we must have in place procedures that will help protect them. This draft policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the following areas:

1. Prevention – Curriculum provision.
2. Procedures – Procedures for dealing with concerns/disclosures.
3. Practice – Best practice in child Protection.

Prevention:

Stay Safe Programme

Scoil Chlíodhna CNS will fully implement the Stay Safe Programme. 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 SPHE curriculum under the strand unit 'Safety and Protection'. On enrolment of their child, parents will be informed that the Stay Safe programme is in use in the school and a copy of 'A Parent's Guide' will be provided. The Stay Safe programme will be taught biannually in its entirety from Senior Infants up to Sixth Class. Additional supplementary lessons are available for children with special needs. Information meetings for parents on Child Safety and the Stay Safe Programme will be organised in the school to explain the programme to parents.

Child Protection Policy and Guidelines

A copy of the school's Child Protection policy, which includes the names of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP, will be made available to all school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on the school website. The name of the DLP and other relevant support services are displayed in a prominent position near the main entrance to the school. In addition to informing the Manager of the school of those cases where a report involving a child in the school has been submitted to the HSE, the DLP shall also inform the school's manager of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made. Scoil Chlíodhna CNS will undertake an annual review of its Child Protection Policy and its implementation by the school. A checklist will be used in undertaking the review. The school will address any areas for improvement which might be identified in the annual review. School personnel

will be informed that the review has been undertaken. Written notification that the review has been undertaken shall be provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome shall be made available, if requested, to the patron and the DES.

Procedures

- All staff members (teachers, SNA's, ancillary, secretarial, caretaking etc.) in the school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in the 'Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' (2011) and the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' (DES 2011).
- The school manager has appointed Gráinne Newton (Principal) as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and ... as the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL). The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection and will represent the school in all correspondence with the HSE, 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. The DLP acts in cases where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion or where an allegation has been made. It should be noted that the school assumes the role of a 'reporter' and not an 'investigator'. Scoil Chlíodhna CNS is obliged by law to report any concerns, suspicions or allegations of child abuse or neglect.
- The Board recognises that it has two duties of care. The primary duty is the protection, safety and welfare of the children attending Scoil Chlíodhna CNS. The Board as an employer also has duties and responsibilities towards its employees.
- As an employer, the Board will seek legal advice if an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee.
- Employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations. Any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively. The employee should be treated fairly which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry. The Board accepts that the principles of natural justice and fair procedures must be adhered to.
- The Board believes that the academic, personal and social development of children flourishes in a culture where good relationships are encouraged, people feel valued and respected and appropriate support is available for those in difficulty.
- The Board is committed to the maintenance of the environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to express themselves and are listened to. All children in the school will be made aware that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried. In addition, opportunities will be included in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to keep them safe.
- The Board undertakes to circulate this Child Protection Policy Statement to all parents and guardians at time of enrolment and on a regular basis thereafter. This policy statement and 'Children First' document will be available for viewing at the school office.
- This policy statement regarding Child Protection at Scoil Chlíodhna CNS applies to all staff, members of the Board of Management, volunteers and contractors working in the school.
- The School Manager/Board of Management will ensure that appropriate, on-going training as necessary will be available to the DLP and DDL from the Child Abuse Prevention Programme.

The staff and management of this school have agreed:

- All concerns/ disclosures involving children protection/ child welfare issues will be reported in the first instance to the DLP (deputy DLP where appropriate).
- Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making the report (see Appendix 1)
- A strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality – information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should only be given on a ‘need to know’ basis.

(See ‘Guidelines and Procedures on Handling Disclosures’ for more detail)

Practice

Certain policies such as Code of Behaviour/Anti-bullying Policy, Pupil Attendance Policy, Internet Acceptable Use Policy and the Supervision of Pupils Policy will take particular account of this Child Protection Policy. This policy will also be considered with reference to the participation by pupils in sporting activities, other extra-curricular activities and school outings. Other practices and activities, where child protection might have particular relevance, will take due consideration of the procedures outlined within this policy.

Garda Vetting

Garda vetting is mandatory for the recruitment and selection of all teaching and non-teaching staff.

Supervision of pupils:

- Children will never be left unsupervised at school. The class teacher will always stay with their class (e.g. visitors/ guests/coaches/trips etc.). In the case of wet playtime, teachers will not leave their class until the teacher on supervision arrives. Classroom doors will be left open and teachers on duty will share the supervision of all classes while teachers have their lunch.
- Normally, staff should not be alone in a classroom with one child before or after school. However, some circumstances require one-to-one teaching e.g. in the case of special needs pupils where resource hours and assistance are sanctioned on an individual basis. It is school policy that staff in such a situation should work with the classroom door open or within view of the glass area of the classroom door, thus rendering the occupants visible at all times.
- Members of the school staff will not carry children alone in their cars at any time.

Toileting accidents

- (1) Wetting: children will be provided with clean clothes to change themselves. If a child is unable to change without help, 2 staff members who are familiar to the child will assist the child.
- (2) Soiling: parents will always be contacted for soiling incidents. Clean clothes and wipes will be provided for children who can clean and change themselves. The parents of children who are unable to clean and change themselves will be asked to come to the school to clean and change the child. In the event of the parent being unavailable and with their consent, 2 staff members who are familiar to the child will help the child to change.

Children with specific toileting/ intimate care needs

In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting/ intimate care, a meeting will be convened, after enrolment and before the child starts school, between parents/ guardians, class teacher, special needs assistant, principal and if appropriate the pupil. The purpose of this meeting

will be to ascertain the specific needs of the child and to determine how the school can best meet those needs. The staff to be involved in this care will be identified and provision will be made for occasions when the particular staff involved are absent. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file.

Internet and Mobile Phone Use

An Acceptable Use Policy for use of the Internet will be implemented in the school.

Mobile Phones – Our Mobile Phone Policy states that phones may not be used by pupils at any time during the school day, on the school grounds. Teachers/Classroom staff may not use their phone during teaching time.

Physical contact

Physical contact between school personnel and the child should always be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult. While physical contact may be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child the following should be factors in determining it's appropriateness;

- It is acceptable to the child
- It is open and not secretive
- The age and development stage of the child
- School personnel should avoid doing anything of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.

Visitors/ Guest Speakers

Visitors/ Guest speakers should never be left alone with the pupils. The school principal/ teachers have a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/ guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use by guests is appropriate.

Confidentiality

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the interests of the child. The giving of information to those who need to have that information is not a breach of confidentiality. This procedure exists for the protection of a child who may have been or has been abused. The DLP who is submitting a report to the Health Board or An Garda Síochána should inform a parent/guardian, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place a 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 should be contacted immediately. A child should not be left in a dangerous situation pending Health Board intervention.

Scoil Chliodhna CNS has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items. While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable a full record of the event should be made and reported to the Principal and the BOM.

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

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis unless the need arises to review it at a shorter interval.

This policy was adopted in September 2015.

Signed: _____
Liam Ahern (*School Manager*)

Signed: _____
Gráinne Newton (*Principal*)

Date: 31st August 2015

Date: 31st August 2015

Date of next review: September 2016

Appendix 1: Highlighted Concern Form

Please describe the disclosure made to you or concern in a factual and objective way providing accurate details/quotes.

Date:	
Time:	
Child's Name:	
Your Name:	
Details of Concern/Disclosure :	

Signed by Staff Member:	
Handed Over to DLP on:	Date: Time:
Signed by DLP:	

Appendix 2: Child Protection Guidelines Checklist for School Employees

Designated Liaison Person: Gráinne Newton

Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Hugh O'Reilly

If a child discloses information to you:-

- Listen
- Do not ask leading questions
- Offer reassurance but do not promise not to tell
- Explain that other adults may need to be told - DLP
- Do not stop the child speaking
- Do not over react or comment
- Inform DLP: If you have a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern that a child is at risk or has suffered abuse, the DLP should contact the Health Board for advice
- At the earliest opportunity, record accurately what the child has said – Using the child's own words. Record date/time and context of the disclosure. Use child's registration number – Not child's name
- Facts only
- Sketch signs of physical injury if appropriate
- Retain records for a period of 21 years in keeping with the school's Record Keeping Policy

The following should also be reported to the DLP:

- An account from a person who saw a child being abused

- Injury consistent with abuse
- Dysfunctional behaviour
- Implausible explanations for injury or behaviour
- Consistent evidence over a period of time that a child is being emotionally or physically neglected

Health Board Response:

- School is asked to monitor the situation
- Formal report is requested, sent by DLP and on receipt case is allocated to Social Worker
- Preliminary enquiry – Screening process
- Initial assessment

Possible outcomes:

- Case closed
- Family support
- Child Protection Plan (usually following a case conference)

Appendix 3: Standard form for reporting Child Protection Concerns



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS

In case of Emergency or outside Health Board office hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána

A. To Principal Social Worker : _____

1. Details of Child:

Name: _____ **Male:** _____ **Female:** _____

Address: _____

Age/D.O.B.: _____

School: _____

1a. Name of Mother: _____

Name of Father: _____

Address of Mother if different to Child: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Address of Father if different to Child: _____

Telephone Number: _____

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

1c. Household Composition:

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g. School/Occupation

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) (if known).

Please state primary reason for referral:

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Male: _____ **Female:** _____

Address:

Relationship to Child:

Occupation:

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: _____

School: _____

Public Health Nurse: _____

Gardai: _____

G.P.: _____

Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club

Hospital: _____

Other, Specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs: _____

5a. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

Yes No

5b. Are the Parents/Legal Guardians supportive Yes No

6. Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re. Limitations of confidentiality)

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family:

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Occupation: _____ **Signed:** _____

Guidance Notes:

Health Boards have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. Health Boards therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Board Personnel
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health boards
- Designated person in a voluntary or community agency
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Board personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

Health Boards aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Board cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her