

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, Cill Choirle

Child Protection Policy



Policy Details

Name of Policy: Child Protection Policy

Date developed:

Signed by

Date Reviewed:

Chairperson: *Geraldine K.*

Ref Code: TBA

Principal: *Donna Kirby*

Edition: v1

Date commenced: *23 June 2020*

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Scoil Mhuire gan Smál is committed to providing its pupils with the highest standard of care and protection, in order to promote each child's wellbeing and safeguard him/her from harm while in the school.
- 1.2 The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál has adopted the "Children First" Guidelines of the Department of Health and Children 2017 and the "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017" of the Department of Education and Skills.
- 1.3 This policy must be read in conjunction with the above named documents in section 1.2, and the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement, Code of Discipline, Behaviour Policy and all relevant registration.

2. Policy Purpose

- 2.1 To provide guidance to all school personnel and parents/guardians on the implementation and management of Child Protection Procedures.

3. Policy Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all students, staff and persons associated with the school.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 **Designated Liasion Person (DLP)** is a full-time member of the registered teaching staff, nominated by the Board of Management, as the designated person for the school when dealing with Túsla – Child and Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and other parties in connection with allegations of and/or concerns about child abuse.
- 4.2 **Deputy Designated Liasion Person (DDL)** is a full-time registered member of the teaching staff, nominated by the Board of Management to assume the responsibilities of the DLP in the absence of the DLP.
- 4.3 **Child Abuse:** where the words "child abuse" are used in these procedures, they should be taken to include all four categories (neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual

abuse) as outline in chapter 2 of Children First: National Guidance for the protection and welfare of children 2017.

- 4.4 **Mandated Person:** Mandated person is a person specified in schedule 2 of the Children First Act, 2015, and includes all teachers registered with the Teaching Council.

5. Role of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- 5.1 The Principal, Mrs Donna Kirby is nominated as DLP. Should circumstances warrant it, the Deputy Principal, Ms Aisling Fahy, is nominated as DDLP.
- 5.2 The role of the DLP is to act as the resource person to any member of school personnel who has a child protection concern. The DLP should be knowledgeable about child protection and should be provided with any training considered necessary to fulfil this role.
- 5.3 In cases where there are concerns about a child and the DLP is not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla or whether a report should be submitted as a mandated report, the DLP shall seek advice from Tusla, as outlined in chapter 5 of "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post—Primary Schools 2017".
- 5.4 The DLP is responsible for ensuring that the reporting requirements outlined in Chapter 5 of "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post—Primary Schools 2017" are followed correctly and promptly.
- 5.5 The specific actions to be taken by the DLP in relation to any concerns about a child including those in respect of joint mandated reporting with registered teachers, are detailed in chapter 5 of "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post—Primary Schools 2017".
- 5.6 The DLP will be the designated liaison person for the school in dealing with Tusla, An Garda Síochána and other parties, in connection with allegations of and/or concerns about child abuse and neglect. Those other parties shall be advised by the DLP that they shall conduct all matters pertaining to the processing or assessment/investigation of alleged child abuse through the DLP. Where the matter concerns a member of school personnel such matters shall be conducted through the employer.

6. Guidelines for the Recognition of Child Abuse

- 6.1 Any member of the school personnel, including a registered teacher who receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected, is required to report the matter, without delay, to the DLP in the school.
- 6.2 Every registered teacher, as a mandated person, also has a statutory obligation to make his or her own mandated report to Tusla where the concern about the child is at or above a threshold of harm as defined in the Children First Act, 2015.
- 6.3 In line with the Child Protection Procedures, the registered teachers shall liaise with the DLP in relation to determining if the concern in question is at or above the defined threshold of harm at which the registered teacher must submit a mandated report.

- 6.4 The threshold of harm is reached when the mandated person knows, believes, or has reasonable grounds to suspect that the child has been, is being, or is at risk of being neglected/ill treated/abused to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected or are likely to be seriously affected.

7. Handling Disclosures from Children

- 7.1 When information is offered in confidence the member of staff will need to act with sensitivity in responding to the disclosure.
- 7.2 The member of staff will need to reassure the child, and retain his/her trust, while explaining the need for action and the possible consequences, which will necessarily involve other adults being informed.
- 7.3 It is important to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anyone else.
- 7.4 The welfare of the child is regarded as the first and paramount consideration. In so far as is practicable, due consideration will be given, having regard to age and understanding, the wishes of the child. The following advice is offered to school personnel to whom a child makes a disclosure of abuse.
- 7.5 The staff member should:
- 7.5.1 Remain calm.
 - 7.5.2 Listen to the child with sensitivity and openness.
 - 7.5.3 Take all disclosures seriously.
 - 7.5.4 Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child.
 - 7.5.5 Offer reassurance but do not make promises.
 - 7.5.6 Do not stop a child recalling significant events.
 - 7.5.7 Do not over react.
 - 7.5.8 Explain that further help may have to be sought.
 - 7.5.9 Record the discussion accurately and retain the record of dates, times, names, locations, context and factual details of conversation.
- 7.6 Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk of harm pending intervention by Tusla. **If it is considered that a child is in immediate danger and Tusla cannot be contacted, An Garda Síochána should be contacted without delay.**

8. Allegations Against School Employees

- 8.1 The procedure to be followed is as per chapters 5 and 7 in "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post—Primary Schools 2017".

- 8.2 Where a parent of a pupil in the school makes an allegation of abuse against the DLP, the Chairperson of the Board of Management shall assume the role normally undertaken by the DLP.

9. Board of Management

- 9.1 Under the Education Act 1998, the Board of Management is the body charged with the direct governance of a school. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure that these procedures are implemented in full and to quality assure their effectiveness on a regular basis. In that regard, good governance requires that the Board of Management can and does satisfy itself that the school has robust procedures in place to enable it to deal fully and properly with all child protection matters in the school in accordance with the Children First Act, 2015, the Children First National Guidance 2017, and with the Department's requirements as set out in these procedures for schools. These procedures contain certain oversight measures aimed at ensuring the Board of Management meets its responsibilities in this regard.
- 9.2 The DLP and the Board of Management shall comply with all procedures as outlined in chapters 7 and 9 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017".

10. Development and Review

- 10.1 This policy was developed based on previous policies, current legislation and best practice.
- 10.2 It was circulated to the staff, Parents Association and Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál for consideration and feedback.
- 10.3 It will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner as required.

References

- **Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post—Primary Schools 2017:**

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Child-Protection/child_protection_guidelines.pdf

- **Children First Act, 2015:**

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

- **Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017:**

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf