

Child Protection Policy of Lismullen National School

The Board of Management 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. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of Lismullen National School has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. The Board of Management 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.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Jerry O'Donoghue
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Jennifer Dempsey
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Lismullen NS 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 pupil with a special vulnerability.

5. This child protection policy was developed in conjunction with the following school policies: Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying Policy, Attendance Policy, Critical Incident Policy, RSE Policy, Internet Acceptable Usage Policy).

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

6. Procedures specific to Lismullen National School are contained in Appendix A.
7. The contents of a letter that will be sent to all new parents/guardians are contained in Appendix B.
8. Child Protection Guidelines Checklist for School Employees are contained in Appendix C.
9. Reporting Procedures for DLP (normally the Principal) are contained in Appendix D.
8. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
9. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: _____

Signed _____
Justin Honan
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed _____
Jerry O'Donoghue
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

APPENDIX A

Child Protection Practices

The staff and BOM of Lismullen School have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to Child Protection. Following discussion and consultation, the staff and BOM have agreed that the following practices be adopted:

- 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 its appropriateness:

- It is acceptable to the child
- It is open and not secretive
- The age and developmental stage of the child

School personnel should avoid doing anything of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

School personnel should never engage in or allow:

- The use of inappropriate language or behaviours
- Physical punishment of any kind
- Sexually provocative games or suggestive comments about or to a child
- The use of sexually explicit or pornographic material

All media products (CDs, DVDs etc.) should be checked for their appropriateness with regard to age and suitability.

Visitors/Guest Speakers

Appropriately appointed and screened visiting teachers of varying disciplines, engaged by the BOM of Lismullen NS to perform specific duties, will be left work with a class alone at the Principal's discretion.

Visitors/Guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The School (Principal/teachers) has a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use is appropriate.

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 the 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.
- Two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care/toileting needs. Any deviation from the agreed procedure will be recorded and notified to the DLP and the parents/guardians.

Toileting accidents

Clean underwear and suitable clothing will be kept in the school so that if a pupil has an 'accident' of this nature, they will in the first instance be offered fresh clothing into which they can change. If the pupil for whatever reason cannot clean or change themselves and the parent/guardians cannot be contacted, the child will be assisted by members of staff familiar to the child. In all such situations, two members of staff should be present. A record of all such instances will be kept and Principal and parents will be notified. A consent form will be given to parents to sign at the beginning of junior infants.

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.

One-to-one teaching

- It is the policy in this school that one-to-one teaching can sometimes be in the best interest of the child
- Every effort will be made to ensure that this teaching takes place in an open environment.
- Parents of children who are to be involved in one-to-one teaching will be informed and their agreement sought
- Work being carried out by Special Needs Assistants will be done under the direction and supervision of the class teacher in an open environment.

Swimming (Changing Rooms)

Swimming lessons are provided for first to sixth class. The Land Paws programme is taught in junior and senior infant classes. Lessons on hygiene and water safety are taught in all classes prior to commencement of swimming lessons.

Parents are not permitted into changing rooms but can view lessons from the balcony. Children are paired with another child of the same gender and class for use of cubicle to dress and undress. Junior classes travel to and from swimming with a senior class.

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.

Behaviour

Children are encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an accident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature, we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

Bullying

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying Policy. If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive, then the matter will be referred to the DLP.

Children travelling in staff cars

Members of the school staff will not carry children alone in their cars at any time. 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 incident should be made and reported to the Principal and parents.

Travelling in Parents' Cars

Parents who assist the school by offering lifts to children for all types of events and matches are required to

- Complete the Statutory Declaration Form
- Ensure that their child is always the first child into their car and the last one to leave it

School Outings

School trips and tours outside of school ground of school ground require extra supervision. A 1: 10 ratio is used for junior and senior classes and a 1: 16 ratio is used for first to sixth class. The class teacher will source parents/suitable adults for each trip. Each parent/suitable adult must complete the Statutory Declaration Form.

Supervision

The school's Supervision Procedures will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks. A rota will be displayed to cover 11 o'clock and lunchtime breaks.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school playground. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or shed where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the school playground or engage with adults who are outside the playground. They must stay within the red lines that are painted in the school playground.

Communication

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral Language/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 or request a colleague to attend. Further details on communications are found in the school's Communication Policy.

Induction of Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Child Protection Procedures (DES, 2011) and Children First Guidelines (2011), but particularly the recently published Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). All new teachers are expected to teach the appropriate SPHE objectives for their class. A member of staff, once trained, will be responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives.

Induction of Parents/Pupils

On Enrolment Day all parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). All parents will be informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development e.g. RSE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe and SPHE. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress. All parents will be given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

Internet Safety

It is the intention of the Principal and Staff at Lismullen NS to ensure that child protection concerns will be addressed in the school's Acceptable Use Policy as part of its Information and Communication Technology policy. The Stay Safe lessons in each classroom may be supplemented with appropriate resources.

Record Keeping

Teachers will keep records on each child's reports. These records are kept locked in a filing cabinet in the teacher's classroom. 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 strong room up to their 21st Birthday. Further details on record keeping will be found in the school's Data Protection/Record Retention Policy.

Appendix B

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In recent years, as a society we have become very aware of the problem of child abuse through neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Each one of us has a duty to protect children and Children First, the National Guidelines, for the Protection and Welfare of Children noted that teachers, who are the main care givers to children outside the family are particularly well placed to observe and monitor children for signs of abuse.

In response to this, the Department of Education and Skills published procedures for all schools in relation to child protection and welfare. These guidelines promote the safety and welfare of all children and are to be welcomed.

The Board of Management of Lismullen National School has adopted these guidelines as school policy. Consequently, if school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child abuse, they are obliged to refer this matter to the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

Children First, the National Guidelines for the Protection of Children may be assessed on the website of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (www.dcyu.ie) and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures can be read on the Department's website (www.education.ie) Parents/Guardians are also welcome to look through the guidelines here at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

(See letter on Junior Infant materials)

APPENDIX C

Child Protection Guidelines Checklist for School Employees

Designated Liaison Person: Jerry O'Donoghue

Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Jenny Dempsey

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 HSE 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

HSE 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 D

Reporting Procedures for DLP (Normally the Principal)

- DLP receives report of child protection concern
- DLP records the report – date/time/context. Child’s registration number is used for recording purposes
- DLP makes decision on how to proceed based on information received
- DLP informs Chairperson of the Board of Management that initial contact is being made with HSE
- DLP makes contact with HSE seeking advice (Do not give name of child at this point. Be very clear that you are seeking advice). Take the name of the person you spoke to and record conversation
- Duty Social Worker makes recommendation. This may involve school continuing to monitor the situation. Record this decision and send written record of this decision to HSE. Alternatively a formal referral made on standard reporting form may be recommended by Social Worker (keep a copy on file in a secure place)
- If HSE not available and case warrants immediate response – Gardaí are informed.
- Decision made on informing/not informing parents/guardians – taking safety of the child into consideration as number one priority. A decision NOT to inform parents/guardians should only be made where there is a genuine concern for the safety of the child. Be transparent with parents/guardians and ensure that they are aware that you have a non-negotiable responsibility as DLP to act in the best interests of the child (Refer to Children First)
- If DLP decides not to contact HSE in relation to the case – person who made original report must be informed in writing
- Continued monitoring of child should be recommended
- Child Protection concerns that have been reported to the HSE should be included in the Principal’s Report to the Board of Management Meeting – Child’s name is not used

Important telephone numbers:

Chairperson Board of Management:	Justin Honan (087) 2585726
HSE	(046) 9073178
Gardaí, Navan	(046) 9079930
Local Hospital: Drogheda	(041) 9837601
NEPS Psychologist	(046) 9093310
CAPP (Stay Safe Programme)	(01) 6206346
Social Work Team Leader	(046) 9097802

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST (updated Nov. 2012)

Gardaí: 046 9079930

Ambulance/Fire Brigade 112/999

Hospital: 046 9021210

G.P. Dr. Mary Murchan
Bedford Place Surgery 046 9021369

HSE/Child and Family Centre: 046 9073178

Chairperson B.O.M. 046 9021731

NEPS Psychologist Jo Flanagan 087 2578803
Michael Cullinane,
Regional Director
046 9093310

INTO (01) 8047700

Clergy 046 9021731

HELPLINES:

Barnardos 01 4530355

Samaritans 1850 609090

Childline 1800 666666

Parentline 1890 927277

Aware 01 6617211 1890 303302

Suicide Bereavement Support 1890 555121

Rainbows 01 4734175

The Bereavement Counselling Service, Dublin 01 8391766
Bereavement Counselling Service 01 6768882

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~nsbsn>

Irish website for people bereaved by suicide, lists support groups

LISMULLEN NATIONAL SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

June 2006
Amended October 2010
Amended May 2011
Amended January 2012
Amended April 2012
Amended December 2013