

Scoil Mhuire Lourdes 13512b

Child Protection Policy - 2011 :

The Board of Management (BoM) of Scoil Mhuire Lourdes, Carrigaline, Cork has carefully considered the 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011' as issued by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

The BoM 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 BoM of Scoil Mhuire Lourdes has agreed the following child protection policy.

In Compliance with Circular 0065/2011 and taking account of Freedom of Information Act 1997, The Education Act 1998, The Child Welfare Act 2000, The BoM of Scoil Mhuire Lourdes 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.

Designated Liaison Person:

The BoM has appointed Principal, Ms. Lorraine Houlihan as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Principal Mr. Michael Harrington to act as Deputy Designated Liaison Person in his absence. The role of the DLP is to liaise with all relevant agencies, whether in seeking advice, reporting or in follow up consultations.

In its policies, practices and activities, Scoil Mhuire Lourdes 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.

Summary of essential information:

Definition of Child Abuse:

Child Abuse can be categorised under four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

Neglect: can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific moment.

Emotional Abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between caregiver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning.

Physical Abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

Procedures in dealing with a disclosure/suspicion from a child/third party:

- 1) Teachers who suspect child abuse should report their concerns to the DLP at the first instance and carefully record their observations over a period of time.
- 2) Disclosures of Child Abuse from a third party will be reported to the DLP. If a third party starts to tell a teacher about an alleged child abuse incident the teacher will ask them to speak to the DLP. If the person does not inform the DLP the teacher will do so.
- 3) 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.
 - a. Listen to the child
 - b. Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child
 - c. Offer reassurance but do not make promises
 - d. Do not stop a child recalling significant events
 - e. Do not over-react
 - f. Confidentiality should be assured - explain that further help may have to be sought.
 - g. Record the discussion accurately noting:
 - h. What where and when?
 - i. Descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries
 - j. Explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate
 - k. Sign and date the record
 - l. Retain the record securely.
 - m. Whether cases of abuse are suspected or confirmed, confidentiality will be respected. The information on individual cases will be restricted to the teacher(s) immediately involved with the child and will be on a need to

know basis.

- 4) The DLP will record the incident. It is not the function of the teacher or the DLP to investigate the issue.
- 5) 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.
- 6) The Chairperson of the BoM will be informed of the disclosure.
- 7) Informal contact with the designated person in the Health Board will be made, seeking advice as to whether a referral should be made. The DLP will be explicit that s/he is requesting advice and not making a report. It is not necessary at this stage for the DLP to disclose his/her name or the name of the school.
- 8) The advice given by the Health Board must be acted upon.
- 9) If the advice is not to refer, the DLP will record this advice as the reason for non-referral. The chairperson of the BoM will be informed.
- 10) If the advice from the Health Board is to refer the case, the DLP will do so. However, prior to referring, the DLP will inform the parent of her intention to refer, unless this course of action is injurious to the child.
- 11) Following referral and the completion of the standard form (available in Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (p's 78/79)), the school will have no further part to play in the investigation.
- 12) If a case conference is required, the DLP will be invited to attend.
- 13) All records will be held in a central, securely locked location.
- 14) At each BoM meeting the Principal's report shall include the number of all such cases where a report involving a child in the school has been submitted to the HSE and also any cases where advice has been sought from the HSE and as a result of this advice no report was made. These shall be included in the minutes of the meeting.

Allegations against an employee

The most important consideration for the Chairperson, BoM 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:

- 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, BoM has responsibility, acting in consultation with his/her Board, for addressing the employment issues.

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

Reporting

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

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 BoM.

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 will then be followed.

The chairperson of the Board and DLP should make the employee aware privately

- a) That an allegation has been made against him/her
- b) The nature of the allegation
- c) Whether or not the Health Board has been/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 BoM 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 BoM should be convened to consider the matter, The Board will consider feedback if any has been received from the Health Board, Gardai or relevant source. This may result in BoM 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 Gardal and/or the Child Care Manager of the Health Board and the legal advisers to the Board of Management.

Administrative Leave

Should the BoM 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.

Board of Management

The Chairperson should inform the BoM 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.

Organisational Implications

The staff and BoM of Scoil Mhuire Lourdes 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.

Stay Safe:

The stay safe programme will be implemented throughout the school.

Supervision:

School supervision policy and routines will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks and before school in the senior school and as children leave the school building at home time. Extra-curricular activities organised by school staff are supervised.

Behaviour: Children are to 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 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.

Visibility:

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school yard. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or sheds where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the school yard or to engage with adults who are outside of the school yard.

Visitors:

Teachers on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the school yard and will ascertain their intentions. They will be supervised in the discharge of their business. All school entrance/exit doors are locked after the children enter the school. Visitors cannot enter the school without contacting the office by using the bell and intercom (fitted at the main entrance door) and giving their reason for entry.

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.

Swimming:

Children will travel by bus to the swimming pool under the teacher's direction. All adults assisting with supervision in the changing rooms will act in 'loco parentis' and as such will act as prudent parents helping children to return to school as dry as possible. Staff supervision will be in line with our School Swimming Policy (which is currently under review).

Children travelling in staff cars:

Teachers/Staff such as SNA's will not carry children alone in their cars. At least two children must travel with the teacher in the car or another adult and child.

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff:

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of this policy and the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.

Dealing with children on a one-to-one basis:

If a staff member has to work/deal/communicate with children on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open.

Medical Personnel and School Psychologists will deal on a one to one basis with children on occasion. Parents will be informed of this prior to the event taking place.

Attendance:

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.

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 on our Accident Report Forms, a record of which will be kept in the Principal's office and will be addressed under our Health and Safety Policy.

If a child has an accident or takes ill during the day the child's parents may be contacted to collect the child. The child will remain in the classroom or go to the secretary's office to await collection unless circumstances make moving the child impractical or pose a threat to the child's safety.

Children who are sick / injured and not going to the yard at lunchtime will be seated in the corridor outside the staffroom.

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.

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 (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. A copy of the school's enrolment policy, which outlines the procedures parents and children should use when contacting the school if there are absences or concerns of an educational/personal/family matter, will be available to all new parents. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress. A copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies will be available for all parents.

Internet Safety

It is the intention of the Principal and Staff at Scoil Mhuire Lourdes 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 will be supplemented with a lesson from the Webwise resource pack recently made available to schools. The school's Internet Usage Policy will be reviewed during the 2014/15 schoolyear.

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 parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the child may 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 incidents will be kept and Principal and parents will be notified.

Recruitment:

Circular 0063/2010 (Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure) is now incorporated into our Child Protection Policy. (main points are included at appendix 1)

The purpose of this inclusion is to enhance the safeguards in place for the protection of all children attending Scoil Mhuire Lourdes.

Also included are Appendix 2 (Statutory Declaration) and Appendix 3 (Form of Undertaking) which must be provided by all persons being appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions of any duration.

Review

This policy was reviewed by the whole school staff at a staff meeting on 13/05/2014.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school staff and by the Board of Management. The next review will be in 2014/15 school year. A checklist for this annual review is included as Appendix 4.

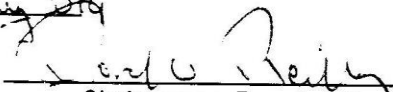
Access

This policy, which includes the name of the DLP and the Deputy DLP, will be made available to all school personnel, the Parent's Association and shall be readily accessible to parents on request.

This Policy was formally adopted by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Lourdes on

27 May 2014

Signed



Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix 1

- Thorough recruitment procedures will be followed and are an essential element of child protection practice in Scoil Mhuire Lourdes. Vetting will not take the place of recruitment procedures but will be used as part of those procedures.
- All persons being appointed to 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. This requirement to be vetted now includes teachers who are changing employment to other schools. Teachers who are seeking employment (including substitute work) and those who are likely to be changing employment(s) should apply to the Teaching Council at least 3 months in advance so that their vetting can be arranged in a timely manner.
- All persons being appointed to non-teaching positions of any duration must be vetted prior to commencing employment unless they have already been vetted through the same registered organisation during the same or previous calendar year. In such cases the relevant registered organisation (e.g. diocesan office, management body etc.) will provide the school authority with either the original vetting outcome or a certified copy of same.
- All other persons, such as volunteers, sports coaches who have, or may have, unsupervised access to children must be vetted unless they have already been vetted within the previous 5 year period.
- 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. A Statutory Declaration is regarded as valid if made in the same or previous calendar year. The school authority must obtain and view the original statutory declaration and retain a copy of it for its own records.
- In addition, an associated undertaking (which is specific to the employing school authority) must be signed by all persons prior to commencing employment of any duration. For administrative ease, the Department's payroll appointment forms will incorporate this undertaking. However, for any appointment (teaching or non-teaching) that does not require completion of a payroll appointment form, the Form of Undertaking (Appendix 3) must be completed. A Form of Undertaking is regarded as valid for other appointments to the same school authority if signed within the same or previous calendar year.

Appendix 2

Statutory Declaration

This statutory declaration must be completed prior to a person being appointed to any teaching or non-teaching position with a school authority unless the person being appointed has previously provided that school authority with a statutory declaration which was made during the same or previous calendar year.

“I _____ of, _____

in the county of _____ aged eighteen years and upwards do
SOLEMNLY AND SINCERELY DECLARE as follows:-

that to the best of my knowledge and belief there is nothing, from a child protection perspective, in relation to my conduct, character or personal background of any nature that would adversely affect the position of trust in which I would be placed in relation to children or vulnerable adults by virtue of my appointment to any teaching or non-teaching position in any recognised primary or post-primary school or any other state funded centre of education for children or vulnerable adults.

Within a child protection context:

- I hereby confirm my irrevocable consent to each of the employing school authorities to the making of such enquiries as they deem necessary in respect of my suitability for the post(s) in respect of which the applications are made.
- I hereby accept and confirm the entitlement of each of the employing school authorities to reject my application or terminate my employment (in the event of a contract of employment having been entered into) if I have omitted to furnish the school authority with any information relevant to my application for the position or my continuing employment with the school authority.
- I understand that any false or misleading information submitted by me in relation to my application for a position or my continuing employment with each of the school authorities will render me liable to automatic disqualification or render me liable to dismissal, if employed.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1938.”

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Applicant

Print Name: _____

Declared before me _____ [name in capitals] a
[notary public][commissioner for oaths][peace
commissioner] [practising
solicitor]by _____

*who is personally known to me,

or

*who is identified to me by _____ who is
personally known to me,

Or

*whose identity has been established to me before the taking of this Declaration by the production to me of passport no. [*passport number*] issued on [*date of issue*] by the authorities of [*issuing state*], which is an authority recognised by the Irish Government]

Or

National identity card no.[*identity card number*] issued on [*date of issue*] by the authorities of [*issuing state*] [which is an EU Member State, the Swiss Confederation or a Contracting Party to the EEA Agreement]

Or

[Aliens Passport no. (*document equivalent to a passport*)[*passport number*] issued on [*date of issue*] by the authorities of [*issuing state*] which is an authority recognised by the Irish Government]

Or

Refugee travel document no. [*document number*] issued on [*date of issue*] by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform]

Or

Travel document (other than refugee travel document) [*document no.*] issued on [*date of issue*] by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform

at

in the City/ County of

on the _____ day of _____ 20__

***Practising Solicitor / Commissioner for Oaths / Notary Public / Peace Commissioner**
*** Delete as appropriate**

Note: Further information in relation to Commissioners for Oaths and Peace Commissioners is available on www.citizensinformation.ie .

Appendix 3

Form of Undertaking

For administrative ease, the Department's payroll appointment forms will incorporate this undertaking. However, for any appointment (teaching or non-teaching) that does not require completion of a payroll appointment form, this Form of Undertaking must be completed prior to the person being appointed unless the person has previously provided this school authority with a Form of Undertaking and associated statutory declaration both of which were made during the same or previous calendar year.

I confirm that, since the date on which I signed the attached statutory declaration, to the best of my knowledge and belief there is nothing, from a child protection perspective, in relation to my conduct, character or personal background of any nature that would adversely affect the position of trust in relation to children or vulnerable adults in which I would be placed by virtue of my appointment to a teaching or non-teaching post in _____ (insert name of school authority).

I also undertake to inform the above school authority of any changes to the above stated position that may affect my suitability, from a child protection perspective, for continued employment with the school authority or for any subsequent employment with the school authority.

I acknowledge and understand that any false or misleading confirmation as to my conduct, character or personal background or any failure of mine to inform the school authority of relevant changes that may affect my suitability, from a child protection perspective, will constitute a breach of my contract of employment and may be grounds for summary dismissal by the school authority.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Prospective employee

Print Name: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____
(on behalf of school authority)

Print Name: _____

Appendix 4

Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of this Child Protection Policy and the following checklist will be used for this purpose.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. The BoM may wish to include other items in this checklist that are of particular relevance to Scoil Mhuire Lourdes and reserves the right to do so if/when the need occurs.

1.	As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess other school policies, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the school's Child Protection policy	YES	NO
2.	Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
3.	As part of the school's child protection policy, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
4.	Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	YES	NO
5.	Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	YES	NO
6.	Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	YES	NO
7.	Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	YES	NO
8.	Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	YES	NO
9.	Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?	YES	NO
10.	Has the Board ensured that the Department's "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools" are available to all school personnel?	YES	NO
11.	Does the Board have arrangements in place to communicate the school's child protection policy to new school personnel?	YES	NO
12.	Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
13.	Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made to the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP?	YES	NO
14.	Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made?	YES	NO
15.	Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/ An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed?	YES	NO
16.	Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	YES	NO
17.	Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	YES	NO
18.	Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	YES	NO

Appendix 5: Letter to Parents re Child Protection Policy

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 Guidelines and 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 Scoil Mhuire Lourdes 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 accessed on the website of the Department of Health and Children (www.dohc.ie) and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Guidelines 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

