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**Child Protection Policy**

**Child Protection Policy of Scoil Náisiúnta Cholmcille Naofa**

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 Scoil Náisiúnta Cholmcille 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 Aoife Winston

3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Helena Gaughan

4. In its policies, practices and activities, Scoil Náisiúnta Cholmcille 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.

5. This section of the child protection policy should be used to list school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection (e.g. the Code of Behaviour/Anti-bullying Policy, Pupil Attendance Strategy, Supervision of Pupils, Sporting Activities/School Outings/Pupil Work Placements at post primary etc.) See Appendix One

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. 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.

7. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management at the first Board of Management meeting annually.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_[date]

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed:

***It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with the* Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools *documents which are available in the Office and online*.**

**Appendix 1**

**Practice:**

The following areas have been considered by the staff and board of management of this school as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and board of management have agreed that the following practices be adopted. ‘Stay Safe- Best Practice in child Protection- Guidance for Schools’ was used as a guiding document in drawing up this section of the policy.

1. **Physical contact**

As a general rule 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 developmental stage of the child

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

1. **Visitors / Guest Speakers:**

Visitors/guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. This also applies to visiting GAA coaches. 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 by guests is appropriate.

1. **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 generally be present when dealing with intimate care/ toileting needs, although this is not always possible, and if a staff member is working alone with a child, this will be done in as open an environment as possible (i.e. occupied sign on the door and door slightly ajar), mindful of sensitivity to the child’s need. Any deviation from the agreed procedure will be recorded and notified to the DLP and the parents/guardians.

1. **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 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 incidents will be kept and principal and parents will be notified.

1. **One- to One teaching**

It is the policy in this school that one-to-one teaching is often in the best interest of the child. Every effort will be made to ensure that this teaching takes place in an open environment i.e. teacher and pupil should be clearly visible through the glass panelled door and door slightly ajar. Parents of children who are to be involved in one-to-one teaching will be informed and their agreement sought. A copy of the time table is given to the principal and on display in the classroom

Work being carried our by special needs assistants will be carried out under the direction of the class teacher in an open environment.

1. **Changing for Games/ PE/ Swimming**

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for games/PE/ swimming. Where assistance is needed this will be done in the communal areas and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/ volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required the parent/guardian of the child will be asked to assist the child. It is the policy in this school that Junior and Senior Infants parents must be present to change their children after children, and if they are unavailable they must nominate another parent to look after their child and inform the school of such arrangements. Where the parent is not available, and responsibility has not been delegated, the child will not go swimming on that day.

At all times there must be adequate supervision of pupils.

1. **Supervision of children**

Children are adequately supervised during the school day and on all school related activities. When first aid is administered in the school this is done in the office and administered by a member of staff. If the injury is of a particularly sensitive nature, two members of staff will be present. Children will not travel alone in staff teachers cars but staff may transport children to and from the church or sporting events. Furthermore, children are not allowed to be collected by somebody unknown to the staff.

See also school Supervision of and collection of children policy 2011.

1. **Recruitment and selection of staff**

The recruitment and selection of staff will be carefully considered. All applications will supply personal details, a resume of work experience and references to the school and garda vetting will always be sought. All volunteers working in the school will do so under the guidance of the teachers and any persons on work placements in the school, it is expected they will be vetted. In accordance with Circular 0063/2010 the school require that all subbing or temporary staff comply with the requirements in relation to Garda vetting and the relevant documentation i.e statutory declaration and certificate of undertaking are kept on file. In accordance with the Revised BOM Constitution no employee of the B.O.M will be a member of the Board of Management.

**i)Internet Safety**

Children are adequately supervised on the internet in school. As a general rule, children are not allowed to bring mobile phones to school or school related activities. The schools acceptable use policy outlines the decisions the school has taken in relation to technology including mobile phones, pictures etc.

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 principal and parents.

**Links to other policy / planning areas:**

**Prevention:** SPHE curriculum, Strand Unit on ‘Safety and Protection’, The School Code of Behaviour.

**Procedures:** Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Statement, supervision and collection of children.

**Practice:**  Swimming Policy, School Tours / Outing, Toileting Policy

***Appendix 2:***  **Procedure for monitoring**

Teachers are the only professionals who are in regular day to day contact with school-aged children and, because of that, we have a key role in situations where there are suspicions that a child is being abused. SNAs and ancillary staff also have a role in situations where there are suspicions that a child is being abused. When there are such concerns, it is essential to keep an objective and factual record of all the information available (Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, DES, **Chapter 4**, Section 4.5.4). We may also be requested, following a child protection conference, to keep a child under observation in a manner that is not consistent with our existing duties (Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, DES **Chapter 4**, Section 4.5.6). This hand-out has been created to assist staff in this regard

Useful Hint: Enter you observations under the various headings as appropriate. This will help to categorise and enable you to note an emerging pattern or a deteriorating situation

**1. St. Oliver Plunkett N.S.**

Code:

**2. Attendance and Punctuality**

Dates and times are important, as patterns of absence of lateness can be very revealing. If a child is late, note if he/she was brought to school by parent/carer/older sibling and record any explanation offered.

**3. Appearance, Hygiene, Care**

Record observations of the child’s appearance, i.e. poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing, no lunch etc.

**4. Physical Injury**

Give detailed description, including, the child’s or carer’s own words, if any explanation is offered.

**5. Child’s Behaviour**

A child may become increasingly aggressive, tense, and unresponsive or show other signs of distress. This, along with sexualised behaviour should be noted.

**6. Child’s Language**

The child may not have the language or is afraid to verbalise clearly what is happening. They may however drop hints or refer to what is happening obliquely. This should be recorded using the child’s own language.

**7. Child’s Drawings/Writing/Play**

A young child may show few signs of abuse when he/she experiences a sense of security in a busy, structured classroom setting. Therefore careful observation of the child in less formal or unstructured settings are important evidence to record. Always include the context in your record e.g. “when returning from the PE room”, “during small break”, “when lining up for home time”

**8. Mood Changes**

Child may, for example, become quiet and tense towards end of day or if collected by a certain adult. This might also happen on certain days or before or after certain activities. Again, remember to include the context in your recording.

***Appendix 2:***

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| **Monitoring Record** | | |
| ***Code*** |  | |
| ***Date*** | ***Observation*** | ***Signed*** |