

Child Protection Policy of Scoil Mhuire, Trim

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 Mhuire, Trim 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 Jacqueline Maher (Principal)
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Gemma E. Kiernan (**Deputy Principal**)
4. In its policies, practices and activities Scoil Mhuire 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. Relevant Scoil Mhuire Policies:

- Code of Excellence
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy for Computer Usage and Internet Access
- Learning Support Policy
- Guidance Plan
- Guidelines for School Tours/Field Trips
- Vetting Policy

The Board will ensure 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 (if any) 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 once in every school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Ratified: January 2017
Date of next review: January 2018

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

N.B. Please familiarise yourselves with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as published by the Department of Education & Skills.

Copies of the full document are available from the **Principal** or on the **DES website www.education.ie**

The following is a summary of the key procedures:

If you receive a report of a Child Protection issue:

You should:

- Listen compassionately Use open, non-specific questions where, what is being reported is unclear
- Make a careful record of the report, using the person's own words as much as possible
- If the person reporting is an adult, invite him/her to provide a written account of the matter
- Indicate what will happen next
- Report the matter immediately to the Designated Liaison Person
- Keep the matter strictly confidential

You should not:

- Question the person reporting, other than to seek clarification
- Make any judgemental statements
- Give any undertaking of secrecy
- Start to investigate

In the event that the Designated Liaison Person decides not to report the allegation to the Health Service Executive, the member of staff who reported the matter will be given a written statement as to why action is not being taken

The member of staff who reports an allegation to the Designated Liaison Person may be asked to attend a Child Protection Conference. The DLP will consult with the Board of Management before responding to such a request

A member of staff reporting an allegation or suspicion in good faith has the legal protection of qualified privilege at common law. The Freedom of Information Acts and the Data Protection Acts will apply to records

Summary of Board of Managements Responsibility in Child Protection

- To provide students with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well being and protect them from harm
- To adopt as school policy the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post Primary Schools and the Protocol Authorising Immediate Action (DES Circular M44/05).
- To designate a senior member of staff as the Designated Liaison Person for the school. It is expected that the Designated Liaison Person will normally be the Principal

- To provide for another person to assume responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person should the Designated Liaison Person be unavailable for any reason, this person to be known as the Deputy Designated Liaison Person

The Designated Liaison Person will inform the Board immediately that a report involving a student in the school has been submitted to the Health Service Executive. No details are disclosed to the Board at this stage, unless there are issues which need to be addressed directly by the Board.

If the allegation is against a school employee, the Chairperson meets the employee privately, gives details of allegation to the employee with copy of related documentation.

Employee is afforded an opportunity to respond in writing to the Board

If the Protocol Authorising Immediate Action has been invoked by the Principal, an emergency meeting of the Board is called

Legal advice should be sought

If the nature of the allegation warrants immediate action, or the ratification of action taken under the Protocol, the Board will direct that the employee absent him/herself from school with immediate effect

The strictest confidence is to be observed

Any further action required by the Board will be informed by the investigations conducted by the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána

Such action will be taken in compliance with the Disciplinary Procedures which applies for our school and Board of Management