



Scoil Bhríde,
Mionloch,
Gaillimh.
Guthán: 091-762323
Uimhir Rolla: 17759J

Scoil Bhríde Child Protection Policy

Introductory Statement

The staff and management of Scoil Bhríde have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines. An individual copy of this policy document will be made available to all staff. All teachers need to familiarise themselves with “Children First” and the D.E.S. child protection guidelines and procedures.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is :- Máire De Brún
(Príomhoide)

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is :- Eibhlín Ní Dhubhthaigh
(Príomhoide Tánaisteach)

In its policies, practices and activities, Scoil Bhríde 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 parents 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.

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

Rationale/Vision

The most important consideration to be taken into account in this policy is the protection of children. Where the school's management or the school's personnel have concerns that children with whom they have contact may be being abused, the matter shall be reported without delay to the Duty Social Worker in the Health Services Executive in accordance with the school's policy, via the school's Deputy Liaison Person, Máire De Brún.

Aims and Objectives

- To protect children
- To create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment
- To assist and give direction and guidance to school management and school personnel in protecting children and dealing with allegations/suspensions of child abuse
- To assist teachers in identifying and reporting child abuse.
- Provide for on-going training in this and related areas for all school staff.

Types of Abuse

The principal types of child abuse are:-

- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

Everybody must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be being abused and this responsibility is particularly relevant to teachers and personnel who have regular contact with children in the course of their work. Safe practices will be adopted to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and to protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave them open to accusations of abuse or neglect. It is not the role of a school employee to investigate allegations of child abuse. The role of the school employee is to:-

Where a disclosure is made by a child to a school employee, the employee should:-

- Listen to the child
- Refrain from asking leading questions or making suggestions to the child
- Use open ended questions e.g. Can you explain?, How?
- Offer reassurances but no promises
- Allow the child to talk/do not stop a child recalling a significant event
- Refrain from over reacting
- Explain regarding future action/that further help may have to be sought
- Record what the child has to say and follow procedures outlined
- The DLP should be then informed and a copy of the report retained by the DLP

- This report should be signed and dated and put in a secure location.

Reporting of Concerns and Role of Tusla

1. The Board of Management will designate a senior member(s) (Principal/Deputy Principal) of staff to have specific responsibility for child protection. This person will be the Designated or Deputy Designated Liaison Person for the school in all dealings with Tusla, An Garda Síochána and other parties, in connection with allegations of abuse. The names of the DLP and the DDLP will be displayed in a prominent position near the main entrance to the school.
2. Where a school employee receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a pupil is being abused, the school employee should, in the first instance, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DLP – The Principal, & DDLP. The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde have appointed Máire De Brún as DLP and Eibhlín Ní Dhubhthaigh as DDLP.
3. If the school employee and the DLP/DDLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation, the DLP/DDLP will report the matter to the Tusla immediately by phone or in writing. (If the report is made by phone, the usual person to contact is the Duty Social Worker. A written report may be made on the Standard Reporting Form. (appendix included)
4. In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of Tusla staff, the report will be made to An Garda Síochána.
5. Reports should include as much information as possible of the information sought in the Standard Reporting Form.
6. In addition to informing the school authority of those cases where a report involving a child in the school has been submitted to Tusla, the Designated Liaison Person shall also inform the school authority of cases where the Designated Liaison Person sought advice from Tusla, and as a result of this advice, no report was made. At each Board of Management Meeting, the Principal's report shall include the number of all such cases and this shall be recorded in the minutes of the board meeting and no other information regarding the case.
7. When submitting a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, the DLP will inform a parent/guardian, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place the child at further risk. A decision not to inform a parent/guardian should also be briefly recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.
8. In cases where school personnel have concerns about a child, but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, they will seek appropriate advice from Tusla. The DLP will consult the appropriate Tusla staff and should be explicit that she is requesting advice and consultation and is not making a report. The DLP will not, at

this stage, give any identifying details. If the Tusla officer advises that a referral should be made, the DLP will act on that advice. Where, following consultation with Tusla, the DLP decides that no referral to the Health Services Executive should be made, the school employee will be given a clear statement, in writing, as to the reasons why action is not being taken. The school employee will be advised that if he/she remains concerned about the situation, he/she is free to consult with or report to Tusla. The Standard Reporting Form may be used. Any such report would be covered by the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

Schools Policies, Practices and Activities

Records/Record Keeping

Records of all the information should be available. Reports should contain as much information as possible. All records will be regarded as highly confidential and retained in a secure location.

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 filing cabinet in the office.

Confidentiality

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should only be shared on a need to know basis.

The DLP should inform a parent or guardian unless to do so would further put the child at risk. A decision not to inform a parent or guardian should be recorded with the reasons for not doing so.

Supervision

All staff will ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks. A rota will be displayed in the staffroom to cover 11:00am and 1:00pm 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 sheds where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the school playground or to engage with adults who are outside of the school grounds.

Attendance

Our school attendance will be monitored in accordance with N.E.W.B. 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 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.

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/ajar or request a colleague to attend.

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. 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 carried out under the direction of the class teacher in an open environment.

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.

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.

Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs

In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting/intimate care a meeting will be arranged, 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 determine 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 kept on 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 the DLP and the parents/guardians informed of same.

Visitors/Guest Speakers

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 by guests is appropriate.

Recruitment and Selection of Staff

All teachers are vetted by the Teaching Council and a vetting letter must be provided to the school.

- SNA's and other ancillary staff will be vetted by local Garda on the request of the Board of Management.
- All substitutes working in Scoil Bhríde must provide their Garda Vetting Letter.

Internet Policy

(See Internet Policy)

School Tours/Outings

Parents that accompany teachers on school tours/outings will be in the company of the teacher whilst assisting with the children, while on the trip. The class teacher has the responsibility of the children while on the outing. The Board of Management will at all times be informed of such outings from the school.

Scoil Bhríde and Áras Phobail Mionloch

Áras Phobail Mionloch (the Menlo Community Hall) is situated on parish grounds and located behind Scoil Bhríde. Sole access to the Áras is through the grounds of Scoil Bhríde. There is a long standing agreement between Áras Phobail Mionloch and Scoil Bhríde that the school will have sole use of the Áras during school hours, i.e., between 9am and 4:15pm, Monday to Friday. This ensures that all personnel entering the school grounds during school hours are doing so on school business only.

The Staff and Management of Scoil Bhríde have agreed:-

- All staff (teachers, SNA's, secretarial, caretaking, etc.) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in "Children First" and the Department of Education and Science document, "Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures".
- All concerns/disclosures involving child protection/child welfare issues will be reported in the first instance to the DLP (deputy DLP where appropriate)
- Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making that report.
- A strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality – information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should only be given on a "need to know" basis.
- 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.

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.

This policy was formulated in consultation with Lisa Noone, PDST Facilitator for Health and Wellbeing.

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 _____ [date]

Signed:- _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed:- _____
Principal

Date: - _____

Date: - _____

Review

Date of next review:- _____

