



## **Scoil Mhuire Child Protection Policy**

This policy was reviewed in Feb 2017 following an in-service seminar facilitated by PDST. The DLP was updated informally from Ms. Elizabeth Kind to Ms. Sarah Leahy on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 and formally on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 during a Board of Management meeting.

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, practises and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary School's the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire has agreed the following Child Protection Policy.

1. The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the 'Departments Child's Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of this overall Child Protection Policy.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (D.L.P.) Ms. Sarah Leahy.
3. The Deputy Liaison Person (D.D.L.P) Mr.Thomas Clarke.
4. In its policies, practises and activities Scoil Mhuire will adhere to the following principles of best practise 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 practises 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 or neglect.
  - Develop a practise 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 adhere to:

1. The above principles in relation to any adult with a special vulnerability.
2. List of policies and activities that are particularly relevant to school protection – Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, Attendance Policy, Supervision of Pupils, P.E. Policy, Tours Policy, Work Placements Policy, Outside coach policy, Health and safety policy-c/f C.C.T.V., R.S.E policy, A.U.P policy, Use of mobile phone policy. Health and safety policy-(re-C.C.T.V.)

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

1. The policy has been made available to school personnel 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.
2. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

## **Best Practice Guidelines**

### **Aim and Rationale:**

In Scoil Mhuire there is a commitment to value each student as an individual created in the image of God. As a Catholic School it aims to respect each student as an individual while at the same time building a community in the school amongst pupils, parents, teachers and staff.

The ethos of a Catholic School is best summed up in the Schedule for a Catholic School, which states:

A Roman Catholic School (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person or the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

To ensure a safe, secure and happy environment for each student, the Board of Management has adopted the Child Protection and Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools and will be implemented by all personnel in the school. In adopting these guidelines, it continues to be essential that a warm and welcoming atmosphere for student is fostered in our school.

### **Best Practice Guidelines.**

1. General Conduct Safe Practice:
  - a. Physical punishment of students is not permitted under any circumstances.
  - b. School personnel must not engage in or tolerate any behaviour that is abusive towards students, either verbally or psychologically.

- c. School personnel should be sensitive to the fact that comments of a sexual nature are inappropriate. Only age – appropriate language, media products and activities should be used with students. In particular, erotic or pornographic material is never acceptable.
- d. The school respects the physical integrity of the student. School personnel should not engage in appropriate physical contact of any kind. They should be sensitive, in this regard, to what might be unacceptable to students from different cultural backgrounds
- e. If a child has a toileting accident the parents /guardians will be called.
- f. Specific or special Intimate care needs will be taken care of by an SNA who has been allocated to the school to specifically look after those care needs.
- g. School personnel should always be respectful of the privacy of students particularly in changing rooms, showers and toilets e.g while on swimming outings.
- h. When working with children who have a disability, relevant personnel are required to be aware of specific considerations including behavioural and communications issues, intimate care needs, access to building, range and choice of activities, and any other relevant matters that may need addressing. Where appropriate, the Board of Management will strive, within the limitations imposed by school resources, to ensure that appropriate specific training, including disability awareness and child protection training, is undertaken by relevant personnel.
- i. When a one-to-one meeting with a student is considered appropriate, it should take place in a room with the door left open or in a room where there is easy visibility from outside the room. Alternatively, it will take place in the corridor where C.C.T.V is in operation.
- j. L.S. and Resource teachers will leave the door open when working one to one with children who have been withdrawn from class. Alternatively, the children will be taken in the classroom or in small groups.
- k. It is not recommended that school employees give lifts in their cars to individual students. However, in exceptional circumstances, there should always be another adult and a minimum of two students present for the entire journey.
- l. Late collections-All efforts will be made to contact parents/guardians. If this is not successful, staff will contact social services or outside of hours the Gardaí.
- m. School personnel must be sensitive to the possibility of becoming over-involved or spending a great deal of time with any one student.
- n. Under no circumstances should alcohol or tobacco be given to students.
- o. In all situations where students are present and alcohol is available, the high standard of professional conduct of personnel in schools should be maintained. Of course, school personnel must never be under the influence of alcohol while they are in charge of students.
- p. With regard to taking of photographs and the making of video recordings of students involved in school activities – when a digital camera is used pictures may be stored on computers and will be erased when no longer necessary. In addition, all video recordings and photographs of children involved in school activities shall be used for school recordings purposes only e.g playing basket ball, winning a prize, confirmation and communion. Photos shall be displayed in

church or on notice board in school or kept in a photo album for historical records projects/ children's personal workbooks.

2. Tours / Outings. C/f main school policy.
3. In the relaxed atmosphere of a trip away appropriate standards of behaviour and good practice, particularly in regard to the aforementioned child guidelines, must be maintained.
4. Internet / Email Policy – Mobile Phone Texts Messaging.
5. In the context of child protection, school personnel should avoid all inappropriate communication with students through internet, e-mail, text messaging or otherwise.
6. P.E Policy c/f outside coaches policy code of ethics to be given to all outside coaches and signed by them.
- 7.

## **Summary of Procedures for Teachers.**

- There is no mandatory reporting of abuse, but I.N.T.O would recommend us to report anything we felt was suspicious.
- Look out for signs of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse c/f pages 8-10 Guidelines also Appendix 1 pg. 70 The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.
- Examples of signs given in “Children First” printed by Children Youth Affairs. Examples could be ongoing, absenteeism, lack of lunches, general appearance of child, demeanour of child, child not being collected, combination of all these and more.
  - (a) Teachers should keep a written record on any child they feel concerned about.
  - (b) If a child makes a disclosure c/f page 14 section 3.5 of C.P.P.
- Teacher then notifies D.L.P. and in the absence of the D.L.P. the D.D.L.P. will be notified.
- D.L.P. will contact the duty social worker, Health Board for advice.
  - a. When speaking to the Health Board do not give any identifying information
  - b. Ask their advice and act on this advice (they might just tell us to monitor the situation or to report it)
  - c. Record the advice given – inform the Chairperson
  - d. If making a report inform the parents – unless it might endanger the child.
    - Page 14/15 Children First – what you include in the report).
    - Feedback should be given to the person who reports.
    - Do not give out information to the Health Board or Social Workers over the phone unless in case of emergency i.e the child might be in danger.

✚ **H.S.E. for children and family services, Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, telephone 067 46636.**

✚ **Child Protection Services, Annbrook, Nenagh, telephone 067 41934.**

✚ **St. Mary's Health Centre, Thurles, telephone 0504 24609**

For procedures re complaints against school staff follow Department of Education and Skills Guidelines c/f also Appendix 9 “Children First”.

**The following policies are relevant to Child Protection:**

1. Code of Behaviour.
  2. Anti Bulling Policy.
  3. Pupil Attendance Policy.
  4. Supervision of Pupils Policy.
  5. Work Placement Policy.
  6. R.S.E. Policy.
  7. Tours Policy.
  8. Outside coach policy
  9. Internet policy
  10. Use of mobile phone policy
  11. Health and Safety policy
- Stay Safe is taught as part of the S.P.H.E. a copy of the Stay Safe materials will be made available to parents in C.D. format. The Stay Safe website address will also be given to them.
  - Tours/outings c/f main school policy. In the relaxed atmosphere of a trip away appropriate standards of behaviour and practice, particularly in regard to the aforementioned child guidelines must be maintained.
  - Internet/e-mail policy – mobile phones / text messaging. In the context of child protection, school personnel should avoid all inappropriate communication with students through internet, e-mail, text messaging or otherwise.
  - P.E Policy c/f outside coaches policy code of ethics to be given to all outside coaches and signed by them.
  - All outside personnel working in the school e.g S.N.A. people on work experience must have garda clearance.

**Standard Reporting Procedures**

Children First pg23

Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Responsibility of Staff pg22.

**Confidentiality**

Children First pg16

Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools pg38

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and will be reviewed every September.

**Signed:** Paul Dooley - Chairperson Board of Management

**Signed:** Sarah Leahy - Principal

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020