

Scoil Muire agus Treasa, Swinford National School

Child Protection Policy (Amended Dec 2016)

Introductory Statement

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. 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 Swinford National School 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 Marian Thornburgh.
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Anne Glavey.
4. In its policies, practices and activities Swinford NS 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.

This policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the following areas:

- a) Prevention – curriculum provision
- b) Procedures – procedures for dealing with concerns/disclosures
- c) Practice – best practice in child protection

An individual copy of this policy document and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures will be made available to all staff. It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures.

Aims:

This policy aims to:

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment
- Provide personal safety skills education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in the school
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community
- Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children and staff
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of and familiar with the 'Children First' and the DES guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosures of child abuse
- Provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all school staff

Prevention:

The Stay Safe programme is the primary resource used in this school to provide education for children on abuse prevention. The programme is taught as part of the schools' SPHE curriculum under the strand unit Safety and Protection.

The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every second year in accordance with the SPHE two-year cycle plan.

Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible.

Procedures:

All staff (Teachers, SNAs, ancillary, secretarial, caretaking, etc.) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Practice:

The following areas have been considered by the staff and the Board of Management of this school as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and the Board of Management have agreed that the following practices be adopted.

a) Physical contact

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.

b) 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.

c) 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(s), 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 particular staff involved are absent. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file.

It is preferable that two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care needs but this may not be always possible. Any deviation from the agreed procedure will be recorded and notified to the DLP and the parents/guardians.

d) Toileting accidents

Parents will be contacted in the event of all such accidents. Clean underwear and suitable clothing will be kept in the school so that if the parent is unreachable the child may be offered fresh clothing to change into.

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 the Principal and parents will be notified.

e) 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 in writing.

f) 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.

Links to other policy/planning areas

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

Procedures: Anti-Bullying Policy, Pupil Attendance Policy. Supervision of Pupils Policy. Health and Safety Statement. Swimming Policy. School Tours/Outings Policy.

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

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 will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on December 9th 2016 .

Signed: _____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: _____

Date of Next Review: _____

Appendix 1: Template Child Protection Policy

Template Child Protection Policy of Scoil Muire agus Treasa, Swinford NS

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 Muire agus Treasa, Swinford NS 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 _____
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is _____
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Scoil Muire agus Treasa, Swinford NS 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. 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.)

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 (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 _____ [date]

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 2: Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	
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'?	
Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	
Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Siochana) to hand?	
Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	
Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	
Have any members of the Board attended available child protection training?	
Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?	
Has the Board ensured that the Department's 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' are available to all school personnel?	
Has the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school's protection policy to new school personnel?	
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'?	
Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made to the HSE/An Garda Siochana by the DLP?	
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?	
Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/An Garda Siochana were appropriately followed?	
Were child protection matters reported to the Board of Management appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	
Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	
Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	
Has the Board ensured that the school's child protection policy is available to parents on request?	
Has the Board ensured that the Stay Safe programme is implemented in full in the school?	
Has the Board ensured that the SPHE curriculum is implemented in full in the school?	

Is the Board satisfied that the Department's requirements for Garda Vetting have been met in respect of all school personnel (employees and volunteers)?	
Is the Board satisfied that the Department's requirements in relation to the provision of a child protection related statutory declaration and associated form of undertaking have been met in respect of persons appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions?	
Is the Board satisfied that, from a child protection perspective, thorough recruitment and selection procedures are applied by the school in relation to all school personnel (employees and volunteers)?	
Is the Board satisfied that the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' are being fully and adequately implemented by the school?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's protection policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the school's child protection and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement?	
Has the Board ensured that any areas for improvement that were identified in any previous review of the school's child protection policy have been adequately addressed?	

Signed _____ Date _____

Chairman, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____

Principal

Notification Regarding the Board of Management's Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of Swinford NS wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's child protection policy was completed at the Board meeting of _____ (date).
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 2 of the Department's 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'.

Signed: _____ Date _____

Chairman, Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date _____

Principal

Reviewed: _____

Responsibility for Review

All members of staff

Parents' Committee

Board of Management

Ratification and Communication

Policy ratified by the Board of Management

Signed _____

Chairman, Board of Management

Date: _____