



Child Protection Policy

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 Gaelscoil Sáirséal 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 **Laura Nic Eoin**
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Ríona Uí Cheallaigh**
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Gaelscoil Sáirséal 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. The following list of school policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to child protection:

- Supervision of Pupils
- Code of Behaviour
- Visibility
- One to One teaching
- Technology
- Visitors
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Accidents
- Toileting
- Children who are Sick
- Swimming
- Children travelling in staff cars
- Record Keeping
- Induction of teachers and other staff
- Induction of pupils
- Communication
- Pupil Attendance

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. A summary of the policies and practices mentioned above is available in Appendix 1 of this policy.

6. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and an electronic copy is available on the school website. It is also 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: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Glossary

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP):

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) refers to the member of staff with specific responsibility for child protection. The DLP is the first point of contact within the school regarding suspicions or disclosures of abuse. The DLP is responsible for reporting allegations or concerns of child abuse to the HSE Children and Family Services or to An Garda Síochána. He or she is the designated liaison person to act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection and welfare concerns (*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2011) Dublin: DCYA, p.22). Child protection concerns should only be reported to the DLP of the school.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP):

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) assumes the responsibilities of the DLP, where the DLP is unavailable for whatever reason (*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2011), Circular 0065/2011).

Appendix 1

The following is a summary of policies and practices pertaining to Child Protection.

Supervision of Pupils

The entire staff will adhere to the School's Supervision Policy, ensuring that students are adequately supervised throughout the entire school day. The class teacher will be responsible for his/her own students from 8.30 a.m. and each class teacher will bring his/her own students to the yard at break time, lunch time and when they leave at 2.25 p.m. A yard supervision timetable will be available for the 11 o'clock breaks and the lunch time breaks. Agreed rules and procedures for break times are available in the school's Supervision Policy. Please refer to procedures in relation to absent teachers as per Supervision Policy. Special Needs Assistants will adhere to the individual educational plan (which has been agreed by all shareholders and signed by the parents) for the child under their care in relation to supervision. This policy and the school tour policy will be followed for any school excursions.

Code of Behaviour

Students are advised to play together in a co-operative manner and challenging behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Code of Behaviour Policy. If the staff are of the opinion that the situation is of a sexual nature the DLP will be notified and he/she will keep a record of the incident, following the national guidelines for Child Protection.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that all students are visible in the school yard. Children are prohibited from being in the classrooms, toilets or any other room in which they cannot be supervised during break/lunch time. Students are not allowed to deal with adults outside of the school yard. Students are only allowed to leave the schoolyard in emergency cases, in pairs, after receiving permission from the teacher on yard supervision (e.g. if a child has had an accident and another teacher is needed for assistance the children may leave the yard to go to the staffroom).

One to One teaching

There are times when one to one teaching takes place in the school. It will take place in a central area in the school and a clear timetable will be adhered to. The Special Education classroom will be visible at all times. Efforts will also be made to take students within their own classrooms for part of this one to one teaching time.

Technology

Pupils are not permitted to bring a mobile phone to school. In exceptional circumstances pupils may bring a mobile phone to school but parents must provide an explanatory note. These mobile phones are switched off and left in the secretary's office for the duration of the school day. The school Mobile Phone Policy is adhered to at all times.

Lessons regarding internet safety are taught to pupils under the school e-Learning Plan. The website www.webwise.ie provides supporting material for these lessons. The school's Acceptable Usage Policy for the internet is adhered to at all times.

Visitors

Teachers on yard supervision will be informed of any visitors entering the school yard and they will elicit the reason for the visit. Visitors will be supervised as they carry out their work. The class teacher will always be present when there is a visitor in his/her classroom. Visitors must sign in and out of the Office and the Hall and must wear a badge which identifies them as a visitor.

Confession: Confessions take place in a public space outside the classroom door. The door is left open and a classroom assistant is present at all times.

Photographer: Photographs will be taken in public spaces and a classroom assistant will be present at all times.

Nurse: Parents are asked to attend in certain cases when the nurse visits the school. A classroom assistant will supervise when parents are not in attendance.

Parents: Parents must report to the secretary's office prior to any meeting with a teacher. Parents are not permitted to go to any classroom without prior permission.

Teachers must be provided with an explanatory note prior to any meeting. Appointments must be made through the office. An exception is made in the Junior School (Halla) as more contact is required in the case of younger children.

Anti-bullying Policy

Bullying behaviour will be dealt with in conjunction with the School's Anti-Bullying policy. In the case of sexual behaviour or if acute abuse is suspected the case will be put forward to the DLP.

Accidents

Despite every effort in adhering to the School's Health and Safety Policy, in ensuring the safety of the children, we acknowledge that accidents do happen. A record will be kept in a 'Book of Incidents' and all action will be taken in correspondence and consultation with the School's Accident Policy, to ensure the health and safety of each child. Any staff member administering first aid will be supervised by another member of staff. A note of explanation, describing the incident will be sent home.

Toileting

No child is allowed to go to the toilet without permission. No child is allowed to leave the yard to go to the toilet. Exceptions will apply to the infant classes who will be allowed to leave the yard to go to the toilet and will be accompanied by another child. Each teacher will apply their own class rules regarding the toilet.

If a child should have an accident in the toilet, the parent's of the child will be contacted and asked to come to the school. No member of staff is allowed to change any child's clothing. If there is a child sick in the toilet, two members of staff must investigate the matter.

Children who are Sick

No child is allowed to stay indoors at break time if they are sick. If a child has a broken hand or leg, they are allowed to sit on a chair in the yard at break time. Children in Infants to Rang a 2 will stay in the older classes during lunchtime and children from

Rang a 3 to Rang a 6 in first or second class. If a child becomes sick during the school day, they must stay in their classroom until their parent(s) arrive. The school secretary will inform the class teacher when the parent arrives.

Swimming

Children walk to the swimming pool under the supervision of their teachers. The teachers are responsible for supervising the children at all times. The girls use one changing room and the boys use another. The teachers remain directly outside these communal changing rooms at all times. Teachers are permitted into the changing room provided there are two teachers at all times.

Children travelling in staff cars

No teacher is permitted to take children in their car. Exceptions will be made in the case of emergency e.g. in the case of accident and emergency, for the welfare of the child, if the child is in risk of death, etc..

Record Keeping

All children's folders are updated regularly, by teachers, with assessment results, dates and details from parent meetings and notes from parents. The roll books are kept up to date on a daily basis. Sensitive information is only shared with the relevant people should the need arise. An educational account of the pupils that have left the school is kept in the filing cabinet in the Principal's office for five years. The pupil's roll number is used when a report is being made regarding an allegation or suspicion regarding child protection. Further information can be found in the school's Record Keeping Policy.

Induction of teachers and other staff

The DLP is responsible for informing all new school staff of the Children First Guidelines (2011) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2011). The DLP will supply a copy of Chapter 2 & 3 and Appendix One of the Children First Guidelines and a copy of the school's Child Protection Policy to each new

member of staff. It is expected that all new teachers teach the objectives of the SPHE programme. The deputy principal is responsible for mentoring new teachers and supporting them in implementing the SPHE objectives. Special Duties post holders are responsible for ensuring new teachers understand how to complete the roll book correctly and informing new teachers of the procedures in place in the school for record keeping.

Induction of pupils

All parents and children will be informed of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the rules governing attendance and the implications of these rules. All parents will be informed about the programmes in school relating to child development, e.g. RSE, Stay Safe, Walk Tall and SPHE. A copy of the school's enrolment policy will be provided to every new parent which outlines the procedures to be followed when contacting the school in relation to a child being absent or regarding educational concerns, personal reasons and/or family reasons. Parents are advised to make an appointment to meet the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress.

Communication

Every effort will be made to improve teacher-student communication. In the event that a child is worried, they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/ Oral Language/ Religious Education programmes provide opportunities for children to communicate openly with teachers and peers, and it is hoped that this would help enhance teacher-pupil relationships. In the case that a teacher must communicate with students on a one to one basis, they are required to leave the classroom door open.

Pupil Attendance

School Attendance is monitored as per the School's Attendance Policy. In relation to child protection specific focus will be maintained on students' attendance and punctuality patterns. Absences that occur regularly with signs of neglect, physical abuse or emotional abuse will also be closely monitored.

Appendix 2

Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of its child protection policy and the following checklist shall be used for this purpose.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. Individual Boards of Management may wish to include other items in the checklist that are of particular relevance to the school in question.

As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess other school policies, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the school's 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 Síochána) 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 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 child 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 Síochána 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 Síochána were appropriately followed?	
Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	
Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and	

securely?	
Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), 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? (applies to primary schools)	
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 child 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 policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement ?	
Has the Board ensured that any areas for improvement that that were identified in any previous review of the school's child protection policy have been adequately addressed?	

*In schools where the VEC is the employer the responsibility for meeting these requirements rests with the VEC concerned. In such cases, this question should be completed following consultation with the VEC.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the child protection policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ 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 _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____