

# **Scoil Íosagáin**

## **Policy on: Child Protection**



## **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 Scoil Íosagáin 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.

The staff, parents and management of Scoil Íosagáin have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines.

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 appended section from the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures will be made available to all staff.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with 'Children First'; National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of children (2011) and the DES child protection guidelines and procedures.

### **AIMS**

This policy aims to

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment.
- Provide a 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.

2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Alma Quinn (Principal).

3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Mary Corcoran (Deputy Principal).

4. In its policies, practices and activities, Scoil Íosagáin 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. School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child Protection.

### **5.1 Procedures:**

All staff and volunteers in the school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in the DES 'Child Protection Procedures' 2011.

#### **Maintaining Records**

When child abuse is suspected, it is essential to have a record of all the information available.

Personnel should note carefully what they have observed and when they observed it. Signs of physical injury should be described in detail and, if appropriate, sketched. Any comment by the child concerned, or by any other person, about how an injury occurred should be recorded, preferably quoting words actually used, as soon as possible after the comment has been made.

All records so created should be regarded as highly confidential and retained in a secure location by the Designated Liaison Person.

The staff and management of this school have agreed:

- 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.

## **5.2 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.

On enrolment of their child parents will be informed that the Stay Safe programme is in use in the school and a copy of the Stay Safe ‘A Parent’s Guide’ provided.

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.

## **5.3 Practice:**

The staff and board of management of Scoil Íosagáin have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and 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, 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 the particular staff involved are absent. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file.

A member of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care/ toileting needs following agreement from all parties. Any deviation from the agreed procedure will be recorded and notified to the DLP and the parents/guardians.

d) 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 if possible.

A record of all such incidents will be kept and principal and parents will be notified. Parental consent regarding toileting accidents is included as part of the enrolment form.

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 when SEN pupils are attending the learning support/resource teacher, they will be taught in pairs/small groups or the SET teacher may teach them in their classroom as part of a team-teaching approach. However when one-to-one teaching is deemed to be 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 involved in one-to-one teaching will be informed and their agreement sought.

Work carried out by special needs assistants will be carried out under the direction of the class teacher in an open environment.

f) Changing for Games/ PE/ Swimming/Christmas Concert/Halloween Hooley/Matches.

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for all the above. Where assistance is needed with changing for games/ PE/swimming/ Christmas concert/Halloween Hooley/matches etc this will be done in the communal areas and with the consent of parents. Consent will be sought for all new entrants on the enrolment form. 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.

At all times there must be adequate supervision of pupils.

While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable a full record of the incident should be made and reported to principal and parents.

g) Accidents/emergencies occurring away from school grounds (school matches, school tours etc)

- In the event of a serious injury, the teacher will first contact the emergency services and then the school. A teacher, assigned by rota (person on first yard duty) or member of the SEN team, will then be sent to the venue to accompany the remaining children back to school.
- The school will notify parents of the injured child.
- The teacher present will accompany the injured child to the hospital.
- In the meantime, if the teacher present has to leave the venue before the designated teacher arrives, the GAA coach/SNA will supervise the remaining children in the interim.
- In so far as is possible, 2 adults will attend all matches.

While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable a full record of the incident should be made and reported to principal and parents.

**Links to other policy areas:**

Code of Behaviour/Anti-bullying Policy

Supervision Policy

Special Education Policy

Health and Safety Statement

Attendance policy

IT – Acceptable use policy – Use of photography

School Tours / Outings / Swimming

SPHE Curriculum – Strand Unit on safety and protection (Stay Safe)

## Review and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis in line with the DES procedures.

- An action plan will be drawn up to address any issues that arise from that review.
- All school personnel and parents will be informed on the completion of the review. A copy of the policy and relevant guidelines will be available in the office and published on the school website.
- Each teacher will receive a hard copy of this policy and an electronic copy of the DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools.

Policy adopted by the BOM on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> 2016

Signed: P.J. Harrington  
Chairperson

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 2016.

Signed: Alma Quinn  
Principal

Date: 19.12.16

**Date of next review:** School year 2017/2018

The board further endorses the Principal Alma Quinn as the school DLP and Deputy Principal Mary Corcoran as Deputy DLP.

On behalf of the Board of Management

Signed: P.J. Harrington

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 2016.

Chairperson