



Scoil Náisiúnta Chnoc na Graí

Child Protection Policy

The staff, parents and management of Scoil Náisiúnta Chnoc na Graí have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and the revised child protection procedures 2025 and the Children First Act 2015

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 Science Child Protection Guidelines will be made available to all staff.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarize themselves with 'Children First' Act 2015 and the revised DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2025

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

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 school's SPHE curriculum under the strand 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 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 **Designated Liaison Person:**

The Board of Management has appointed School Principal Eleanor O Connell as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Brigid O Shea, Acting Deputy Principal as the deputy DLP. The role of the DLP is to liaise with all relevant agencies, whether in seeking advice, reporting or in the follow up consultations.

Procedures in dealing with a disclosure/suspicion from a child/third party:

- * Teachers who suspect child abuse should report their concerns to the DLP at the first instance and carefully record their observations over a period of time
- * Disclosures of child abuse from a third party will be reported to the DLP. If a third party starts to tell a teacher about an alleged child abuse incident the teacher will ask them to speak to the DLP. If the third person will not inform the DLP, the teacher will do so.
- * Where a child discloses alleged abuse to a staff member, the person receiving that information should listen carefully and supportively. Great care must be taken not to abuse the child's trust. This should not be a formal interview.
 - ✚ Listen to the child
 - ✚ Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child
 - ✚ Offer reassurance but do not make promises
 - ✚ Do not stop a child recalling significant events
 - ✚ Do not over-react
 - ✚ Confidentiality should be assured – explain that further help may have to be sought
 - ✚ Record the discussion accurately noting:
 - What, where and when?
 - Descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries
 - Explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate
 - Sign and date the record
 - Retain the record securely
- * Whether cases of abuse are suspected or confirmed, confidentiality will be respected. The information on individual cases will be restricted to the teacher(s) immediately involved with the child and will be on a need to know basis.
- * The DLP will record the incident. It is not the function of the teacher or the DLP to investigate the issue.
- * If the suspected abuser is the DLP then the suspicion and any records will be passed on to the Chairperson who will proceed as per guidelines.

- * The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed of the disclosure.
- * Informal contact with the designated person in the HSE South will be made, seeking advice as to whether a referral should be made. The DLP will be explicit that he/she is requesting advice and not making a report. It is not necessary at this stage to disclose his/her name or the name of the school.
- * The advice given by the health board must be acted upon.
- * If the advice is not to refer, the DLP will record this advice as the reason for non-referral. The Chairperson of the BOM will be informed.
- * If the advice from the Health Board is to refer the case, the DLP will do so. However, prior to referring, the DLP will inform the parent of his/her intention to refer, unless this course of action is injurious to the child.
- * Following referral and the completion of the standard form, the school will have no further part to play in the investigation.
- * If a case conference is required, the DLP will be invited to attend.

All records will be held in a central, securely locked location.

Allegations against an employee

- * Procedures followed are similar to those of a disclosure
- * Employee is made aware of the allegation against him/her
- * Employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing and at a meeting of the BOM
- * BOM meeting to review the allegation, giving due consideration to any advice given by Health Board and Gardaí
- * The BOM will consider placing the employee on administrative leave, with full pay, pending the outcome of investigations by the Health Board and Gardaí
- * On conclusion of any investigation, the BOM will then determine the employment status of the employee.

Practice

The following areas have been considered by the staff and BOM as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection.

Supervision

School supervision policy and routines will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision at all breaks and before and after school

Behaviour

Children are to be 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

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school yard. Children will not be allowed to spend time in the classrooms, toilets or shed where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the schoolyard or engage with adults who are outside of the school yard.

Visitors / Guest Speakers

Visitors / Guest Speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The school 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. Teachers on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the schoolyard and will ascertain their intentions. They will be supervised in the discharge of their business. Visitors cannot enter the school without contacting the office and giving their reason for entry.

Swimming

All adults assisting with supervision in the changing rooms will act as 'loco parentis' and as such will act as prudent parents advising children to return to school as dry as possible

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 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.

Children travelling in staff cars

Teachers will not carry children alone in their cars. At least two children must travel with the teacher in the car or another adult and child.

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of this policy and the Children First Guidelines

Dealing with children on a one-one basis

If a staff member has to work/deal/communicate with children on a one-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open. There is a glass panel in the resource/learning support room.

Attendance

With regard 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.

Links to other policy / planning areas:

Knocknagree N.S.

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

Procedures: Anti- Bullying policy/Bi Cineálta policy
Health and Safety Statement

Practice: Swimming
School Tours / Outings

Review and Monitoring:

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

Policy adopted by the BOM on

Signed:
Chairperson