

# *Scoil Phádraig Naofa*

## *Child Protection Policy*

*This policy should be visible in the classroom at all times*

This policy has been compiled by the partners in education in Scoil Phádraig Naofa. Our aim is to ensure that child protection is accorded the highest priority in our school and that best practice is the norm in this regard in Scoil Phádraig Naofa.

The child centred, holistic, inclusive Catholic ethos of our school and its characteristic spirit is reflected in this policy.

The Board of Management of Scoil Phádraig Naofa recognises its duty in the provision of a high level of care and a safe environment for our boys and the promotion of their well being, development, self esteem and protection from harm.

Mindful of this duty of care, the Board of Management of Scoil Phádraig Naofa formally adopts and will implement without modification "**Children First**", the National Guidelines for the protection and Welfare of children as issued by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011

The Board of Management fully accepts the Roles and Responsibilities of schools as outlined in section 4.8 of 2011 Child Protection Procedures.

- ❖ The Board nominates **Declan Fogarty** as the designated liaison person (DLP) to act as a liaison with outside agencies such as health board and as a resource person to any staff having child protection concerns. All matters pertaining to the processing or investigation of child abuse should be processed through the DLP.
- ❖ In the absence of Declan Fogarty, **James Connolly** will act as Deputy Designated Liaison Person.
- ❖ The Board will ensure that the **Stay Safe Programme** which is mandatory, will be fully implemented.
- ❖ The Board will ensure that the **S.P.H.E. programme** which is mandatory, will be fully implemented
- ❖ The Board fully endorses arrangements for the vetting of teaching and non-teaching staff as outlined in Circular 0094/2006, June 2006, for the Department of Education and Science.
- ❖ The Board will ensure that appropriate and on going training as necessary will be available for DLP and the DDLP.
- ❖ Recognising that the safety and well-being of the boys attending the school is priority, the Board undertakes to include Child Protection and Health and Safety matters as items on the agenda of all Board meetings.
- ❖ The Board will ensure that all school staff, teaching and non teaching are aware of their obligations under the guidelines detailed in Children first and procedures to be followed in the event of concern. To this end a hard copy of this policy shall be provided and will be visible in every classroom.
- ❖ The BoM will review the Child Protection Policy on an annual basis using the Appendix 2 of the DES Child Protection Procedures
- ❖ Following review the BoM shall put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review and arrange for these to be dealt with as quickly as possible.

### Procedures for Child Protection in School

1. The Board of Management will ensure the school building and grounds are safe and secure for the boys. All buildings and play areas will comply with Health and Safety regulations.
2. D.E.S. guidelines will be observed in the supervision of boys at all times and for all school activities both on and off the school premises.
3. The school playground is secured in as safe a manner as is practicable (Railings and gates have been erected to further secure the play area.)
4. Unauthorised adults are not permitted to enter the school playground or speak to the boys.
5. Any parent or other unauthorised adult who wishes to gain entry to the school for whatever purpose must do so through the main reception.
6. Unauthorised adults, visitors, parents may not have open access to the school playground or building for child protection and insurance reasons. Signage to this effect is erected in relevant areas of the school.
7. There is no pedestrian access through the school car park for child protection and health and safety reasons.
8. All external coaches and tutors will have Garda Vetting and will be accompanied by a member of school staff for all interactions with children.
9. School staff will not be alone with children except for one-to-one teaching or discussions of a sensitive nature. Anything of this nature will take place in a classroom with a viewing panel in the door and the door ajar if possible.
10. Parents who wish to wait with their children before school in the mornings will wait in the clearly designated waiting area adjacent to the playground.

### Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse.

Staff member with reasonable cause for concern or in receipt of a direct disclosure reports to the designated Liaison Person.

The DLP in accordance with **Children First**...

- refers the matter to the Health Board,
- Outlines the details of the causes for concern of disclosure to the Duty Social Worker and acts on advice as whether to proceed in referral of the case.
- if no action is to be taken the staff member is informed and the child in question is kept under observation,
- if considered appropriate the Health board are formally informed by phone and a copy of the disclosure form is forwarded to the Health Board,
- The Chairperson of the Board of Management is informed.
- Written contemporaneous notes are to be kept on file in each case.

### ❖ Handling a disclosure.

- Listen.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Offer reassurance - do not make promises that cannot be kept.

- Allow the child time and opportunity to talk.
- Do not over react.
- Explain that there will be further reaction.
- Record immediately and factually.
- Report to the DLP.
- DLP always should get advice or refer the matter to the Health Board.

❖ **Confidentiality.**

- **All disclosure must be treated with absolute confidentiality with only those with a need to know being informed.**
- The Gardaí are informed if appropriate and especially if there are concerns for the child safety.
- The parents/guardians of the child are informed of the disclosure and the referral of the matter to the statutory bodies involved.
- All teaching staff and S.N.A.'s will record incidences, information or observations which cause concern for the safety or health and well being of a child.

Training as appropriate will be organised on an ongoing basis.

❖ **Best Practice for Prevention of Child Abuse.**

- Continual Teacher/staff/B.O.M/Parent training.
- Our school is a telling school. An atmosphere of trust and openness is fostered between staff and pupils.
- Education, Self Esteem, rights, feelings, emotions and the language required are reinforced through the teaching of the S.P.H.E. programme.
- The Stay Safe Programme is taught in full every year to all pupils in this school. The module on bullying is taught every year to all pupils in the school.
- The Anti-bullying Policy is fully implemented in all aspects in all classes. [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie)
- Pupils are given the personal safety skills to help them to respond safely to a dangerous upsetting or abusive situation before it becomes more serious.

❖ As best practice all staff will be informed regarding.

A) Recognition of Child Abuse. All signs and symptoms must be examined and considered in the context of the child's situation and family circumstances. There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse

- considering the possibility,
- looking for/observing signs of abuse,
- Recording of information.

B) Types of Abuse

- 1) Sexual Abuse - Peer Abuse,
  - contact/non contact abuse - peer abuse, exploitation.
- 2) Emotional Abuse - Exposures to domestic violence,
  - Psychological abuse.
- 3) Neglect - circumstantial or wilful, significant harm.

- Impairment of development by being deprived.
- 4) Physical - non-accidental injury, failure to protect,
  - Actual or potential harm from an interaction or lack of interaction.
  - Child observing violence.

### Duty of Care

- ❖ The Board recognises that it has two duties of care.
  - 1.) The primary duty is the protection, safety and welfare of the children attending Scoil Phádraig Noafa.
  - 2.) The Board as an employer also has duties and responsibilities towards its employees.

### Allegations against Employees

- ❖ Chapter 5 of D.E.S. Child Protection Procedures will be fully adhered to.
- ❖ As an employer, the Board will seek legal advice if an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee.

The Board will ensure immediate action when it is necessary to put a staff member on administration leave. The Chairperson will, after contact with the H.S.E. or Gardaí and following their advice (where circumstances warrant it) direct an employee to immediately absent him/herself from the school without loss of pay until the matter has been considered by the B.O.M. **This is a precautionary not a disciplinary matter.** The employee will receive a written invitation to a meeting, the purpose of which is to inform him/her regarding the allegation and action being taken. The employee will be advised that she/he may be accompanied by an "appropriate" person. Where this protocol is invoked, an Emergency B.O.M. meeting shall be convened.

Matters shall be treated in strictest confidence. All records /documentation including BoM minutes should contain unique identifier references (not the employees initials). There should be no mention of the matter in the 'agreed report'.

The Chairperson will inform the employee

- That an allegation has been made against him/her
- The nature of the allegation
- Whether the matter has been reported to the H.S.E.
- Will give the employee a copy of the written allegation and other related documentation
- Will seek a response in writing from the employee
- Will take appropriate protective measures.

The Board notes that school employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations. Any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively. The employee should be treated fairly, which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry. The Board accepts that the principles of natural justice and fair procedures must be adhered to.

The Staff and Board of Management of Scoil Phádraig Noafa believes that the academic, personal and social development of children flourishes in a culture where good relationships are encouraged, people feel valued and respected and appropriate support is available for those in difficulty.

- ❖ The Board is committed to the maintenance of such an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to express themselves and are listened to. All children in the school will be made aware that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried. In addition, opportunities will be included in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to keep them safe.
- ❖ The Board undertakes to circulate this Child Protection Policy statement to all parents and guardians at time of enrolment and on a regular basis thereafter. This policy statement and "Children First" will be available for viewing at the school office.
- ❖ This policy statement regarding Child Protection at Scoil Phádraig Naofa applies to all staff, members of the Board of Management, volunteers and contractors working in the school.
- ❖ This policy has links to our Anti Bullying Policy, Enrolment Policy and S.P.H.E. Policy.
- ❖ Best Practice is followed in Child Protection in Scoil Phádraig Naofa.
- ❖ Best practice will be adhered to regarding - Recruitment and retention of staff.
- ❖ This policy statement will be subject to review in January 2023.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson B.O.M Mary Maher

Designated Liaison Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Declan Fogarty

Deputy Designated Liaison Person: \_\_\_\_\_

James Connolly

This policy was approved by the Board of Management Scoil Phádraig Naofa.

Date 25 - 1 - 2022.

Ref: Children First-National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011  
 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary School 2011-D.E.S.  
 Circular 63/2010