

Child Protection Policy of St. Mary's National School, Coolfancy, Co. Wicklow

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 Skill's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of St. Mary's National School, Coolfancy has agreed the following:

1. The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedure for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of this overall child protection policy.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mrs. Deirdre O'Donnell (School Principal).
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Ms. Maeve Murphy (Deputy School Principal).
4. In its policies practices and activities, St. Mary's National School, Coolfancy will adhere to the following principals 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 principals in relation to any adult with special vulnerability.

5. The Policies which are particularly relevant to child protection are
 - The Code Of Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy
 - Pupil Attendance Policy
 - Supervision of Pupils
 - Substance Use Policy

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

6. **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 records 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.

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 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.

Practice:

The staff and board of management of this school 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 it’s appropriateness –

- It is acceptable to the child
- It is open and not secretive
- The age and development stage of the child.

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/teacher) 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 toilet/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 pupils. 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. 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.

A record of all such incidents will be kept and 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. Work being carried out by special needs assistants will be carried out under the direction of the class teacher in an open environment.

(f) Swimming

Children will be brought by bus to the swimming pool. Children will line up in an orderly manner for the bus as part of Health & Safety. Teachers and ancillary staff will supervise the changing rooms in order to ensure the children's safety.

(g) Yard Supervision

Currently one teacher and SNA are on duty to supervise both breaks during the day. 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.

7. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parent's Association and is readily available to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

8. This policy will be reviewed by the Board Of Management once every school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____

Principal

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

**St. Mary's National School,
Coolfancy.**

**For The Purposes of Child Protection
Under The Children First Guidelines**

**The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in this
school is:**

Mrs. Deirdre O'Donnell (Principal)

Deputy DLP is:

Ms. Maeve Murphy (Deputy Principal)

**(Board Of Management,
St. Mary's National School,
Coolfancy
Tinahely
Co. Wicklow)**

Note: At time of ratification, the Principal is still on long term illness leave therefore not functioning as Designated Liaison Person.

The Deputy Principal (Maeve Murphy) is functioning as D.L.P. and the functioning Deputy D.L.P. is P.J. Nolan.

**St. Mary's National School,
Coolfancy.**

**For The Purposes of Child Protection
Under The Children First Guidelines**

**The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in this
school is:**

Ms Maeve Murphy (Acting Principal)

Deputy DLP is:

**Mr. P.J. Nolan (5th and 6th Class
Teacher)**

**(Board of Management,
St. Mary's National School,
Coolfancy
Tinahely**