

ST. FINTINA'S POST PRIMARY SCHOOL REVISED CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This document sets out the policy of the school in relation to Child Protection. It also gives clear procedures which teachers and other staff must follow where they suspect, or are alerted to, possible child abuse, including where a child discloses abuse. **The school:**

- recognises that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance
- will fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- will 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 them open to accusations of abuse or neglect
- will develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children
- will fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

Legislation:

The main legislation governing the care and protection of children is the Child Care Act, 1991. The Domestic Violence Act, 1996 and the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse, 1998 are also relevant to child protection and welfare. Other relevant legislation includes the Education Act, 1998, The Non Fatal Offences against the Person Act, 1997 and Freedom of Information Act, 1997. Ireland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. The convention is a "bill of rights" for all children. *Children First-National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 is the most recent legislation.*

Scope:

This policy applies to all students in the school, parents/guardians and the whole school staff including teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and visitors.

Relationship to School's Mission/Vision/Aims:

Our aim at St. Fintina's is to provide the opportunity for each individual to reach his/her full potential in a caring supportive environment. It is the policy of St. Fintina's to safeguard the welfare of all our students by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

Aims:

The aim of this policy is to keep staff members aware of their *duty of care* to the students that they associate with on a daily basis. It also assists people in identifying and reporting child abuse.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is complicated and takes different forms, but usually consists of one or more of the following:-

Neglect

This is where a child's needs for food, warmth, shelter, *hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection for adults and / or medical care* are not provided for, to the extent that the child suffers significant harm.

Emotional Abuse

Where a child's needs for affection, approval and security are not being met and have not been met for some time by their parent or carer.

Physical Abuse

Where a child is assaulted or injured in some way that is deliberate.

Sexual Abuse

This is where a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult.

Preventative Measures

- 1. The SPHE programme is taught to all junior cycle students and the RSE programme is also taught to senior students as part of the Pastoral Care programme.***
- 2. Garda vetting procedures are in place for all new employees and personnel with unsupervised access to students.***
- 3. All new employees and people working with students are made aware of the Child Protection policy***
- 4. Child protection procedures are discussed with all staff at the start of the year***
- 5. Child protection is an item on the agenda for every BOM meeting***
- 6. The DLP, DDLP, some staff and BOM members have attended external training on Child Protection.***

Procedures To Follow If You Suspect That A Child Is Abused:

It can be difficult to know whether or not your suspicions about child abuse are real. Before you act on them, you need to consider whether any alternative explanation might exist and ask yourself these questions:

- Is there any other reason why the child or parent might be behaving in a particular way?
- Is there a pattern of type of occurrence?
- Did you or anyone else see what was happening?
- Has the child said anything to indicate that he or she is being harmed?
- Could injuries or signs have been caused another way?

If you have considered these questions and you are still concerned, it is likely that you have reasonable grounds to take some action.

Inform the child that you may have to divulge this information to the DLP

When child abuse is suspected, it is essential to have a written 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. Any comment by the child concerned, or by any other person, should be recorded, preferably quoting words actually used by the child. The record should be signed and dated and given to the Designated Liaison Person. All information should be regarded as highly confidential and placed in a secure location. It is important to deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way. Record accurately what the child says, do not ask leading questions, and do not make assumptions.

The child should be given some indication of what would happen next, such as informing the Designated Liaison Person, parent/carers, HSE or possibly the Garda Síochána.

The duty of the recipient of such information is to report it to the **Designated Liaison Person**. **The DLP currently is the Deputy Principal Ms. Monica Clarke and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person is the Principal Mr Thomas Stack**

If the Designated Liaison Person is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation he/she should report the matter to the relevant HSE immediately. A copy of the Standard Reporting Form accompanies this policy. ***If the DLP decides not to report the suspicions from a staff member then a written explanation will be given as to why action is not being taken. If the staff member is still concerned then s/he may report the suspicion to the HSE.***

When such a report is made to the HSE ***or if the HSE is contacted for advice***, the Board of Management of the school should be informed. The DLP who is submitting a report to the HSE or An Garda Síochána should inform a parent/carer unless doing so is likely to endanger the child. A record of the information communicated should be made or a decision not to inform a parent/carer should also be briefly recorded.

If the DLP is unsure whether to report a suspicion or not then he or she should contact the **Duty Social Worker** for advice. No identifying details should be given at this stage. If the HSE advises that a referral should be made, the DLP should act on this advice and also inform the school's Board of Management. No details of the report should be disclosed to protect the child's identity. ***If the advice is not to report the information then the DLP records the date, the name of the duty social worker and the advice given. This contact is reported to the BOM by the principal.***

Teacher Responsibility

- Observe
- Record
- Report to DLP
- DLP Responsibility
- Contact Duty Social Worker for information or advice.
- Informs the HSE.
- Informs the Board of Management.
- Informs CEO.

Allegation or Suspicions of Child Abuse by School Employees:

It is important to note that there are two procedures to be followed:

- I. The reporting procedure in respect of the allegation.
- II. The procedure for dealing with the employee.

The DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to the appropriate HSE while the employer, the Chief Executive Officer of County Meath Vocational Educational Committee (CEO), is responsible for addressing the employment issues.

School employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff including counselling where necessary. Employers should note that legal advice should always be sought in these circumstances. We have adopted (appendix 5 page 35) of the Guidelines to authorise any immediate actions which may be required to protect children. The CEO must be informed

immediately. The Principal of the school is not to approach the staff member in relation to this. He can seek advice from the CEO and not name the staff member initially. It is the responsibility of the CEO to approach the staff member.

The school Principal or DLP can contact the “**Child Care Manager**” (in the HSE) in the case of a staff allegation, in confidence seeking advice without giving names.

To complete this policy we fully **adopt and implement without modification** “**Child Protection Procedures for Post Primary Schools**” issued by the **Department of Education and Skills in 2011**

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 them 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.*

Other school policies pertaining to Child Protection are:

1. *Code Of Behaviour*
2. *Anti-bullying*
3. *Pastoral Care Policy*
4. *Relationship and Sexuality Policy*
5. *Attendance and Punctuality policy*
6. *School outings policy*

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by the BOM and any issues of concern will be addressed immediately by the school. School personnel will be informed of the review and The Parents’ Association will be notified in writing that the review has taken place. Form at Appendix 1 will be used as part of this review.

Policy drafted in 2008

Presented to staff:

14th March 2008

Parents consulted on:

23rd September 2009

Students consulted on:

Ratified by B.O.M. on:

Ratified by VEC on:

This becomes official school policy on:

Reviewed in October 2011 by the Steering Committee

Parents consulted: 11th October 2011

Students consulted: 4th October 2011

Teachers consulted: 10th October 2011

BOM consulted: 10th October 2011

Ratified by BOM: 10th October 2012

Ratified by the VEC

Latest Review 22nd October 2012

Appendix 1: Template Child Protection Policy

Template Child Protection Policy of St Fintina's

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 **St Fintina's Post-Primary School** 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 **Ms Monica Clarke**
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Mr Thomas Stack**
4. In its policies, practices and activities, **St Fintina's Post Primary School** 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 school policies and practices are also relevant: Code of Behaviour policy, Anti-Bullying policy, Attendance and Punctuality policy, School Tours policy and effective supervision of students

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.

6. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association (if any) and is 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: _____

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.	
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 stored securely?	
Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association 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 _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal

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

The Board of Management of **St Fintina's Post-Primary School** 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 _____.
- 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 _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal

STANDARD REPORT FORM



Féilidheannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

1. Date of Report	
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Name:			Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Address:			DOB		Age	
			School			
Alias			Correspondence address (if different)			

Name:		Telephone No.	
Address:		Occupation	
		Relationship to client	
Reporter wishes to remain anonymous	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reporter discussed with parents/guardians	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are the child's parents/carers aware that this concern is being reported to the HSE?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known.)

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FORM NUMBER: CC01:01:00

STANDARD REPORT FORM

(For reporting CP&W Concerns to HSE)



6. RELATIONSHIPS

Details of Mother		Details of Father	
Name:		Name:	
Address: (if different to child)		Address: (if different to child)	
Telephone Nos:		Telephone Nos:	

7. Household composition

Name	Relationship	DOB	Additional information, e.g. School/Occupation/Other

8. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

	Name	Address
Social Worker		
PHN		
GP		
Hospital		
School		
Gardaí		
Pre-School/Crèche/YG		
Other (specify):		

9. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child

Relationship to child:		Age		Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name:		Occupation					
Address:							

10. Details of person completing form

Name:		Occupation	
Signed		Date:	

National Child Care Information System Project – Phase 3