

St. Dymphna's School Child Protection Policy

Introductory Statement

St. Dymphna's School endeavours to nourish the educational, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development of each student to his/her potential with the future expectation of active participation in his/her local community. The role of the school is to provide an appropriate education for our pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is essential to achieve this goal. We are committed to creating a safe and positive learning environment that is respectful, inclusive, and caring for all our pupils. We believe that children have the right to learn in an environment in which they feel secure and protected from all forms of harm, such as neglect, assault, ill-treatment, or sexual abuse. Our staff are vigilant for any signs of distress or harm among our pupils and apply our safeguarding procedures diligently to address and alleviate any such problems.

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all the school's policies, practices, and activities.

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.

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. Dymphna's School has approved the following child protection policy:

The following key personnel have been identified and received

training. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is

Maureen Quinn

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is
Eileen Murphy

Prevention

In its policies, practices and activities, St. Dymphna's 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.
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with ‘Children First’ and the DES guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/ or disclosures of child abuse.
- The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

The following school policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to child protection in the context of this school – we wish to ensure consistency and transparency.

a) The Stay Safe Programme for students with special needs is the primary resource used in this school to provide education for students on abuse prevention. The programme is taught as part of the school’s SPHE curriculum under the strand unit Safety and Protection (Personal Safety). St. Dymphna’s Special School will teach aspects of all three major strand units each year and strand units will be chosen in such a way that the child will receive a comprehensive programme in SPHE to suit their individual level of ability over a two-year period.

b) Pupils for post-primary are assigned to a class according to their readiness and maturity for the programme. As pupils in this school have special needs there is a necessity to revise the language in relation to the lessons continuously.

Junior Cycle Level 1 & 2 Priority Learning Units, Personal Care and Wellbeing provides opportunities to explore personal safety.

QQI programmes' can be used to support the Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP) within the Junior Cycle. An IEP meeting is held for parents and relevant professional once a year and matters in relation to Child Protection are discussed if required. The procedures for teaching the programme in collaboration with parents/guardians have been outlined in our SPHE/ RSE Policy. Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible.

The school will be developing a Wellbeing Policy and plan in 2021-22. This will be the area for SSE in 2021-22 This policy will be developed in line with Dept of Education Guidelines.

Procedures

All staff (teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff, secretarial, bus escorts) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in 'Children First' and the Department of Education and Skills document, 'Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures.'

A Child Safeguarding Statement was developed in line with recommendations in the Children First Act. This Safeguarding Statement is displayed in all classrooms and is also available to view on the server and the school website.

This Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually. The Board of Management of this school has appointed the Principal as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Special Duties post holder 1 as the Deputy DLP.

Practice

School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection include:

- Pupil attendance policy.
- Enrolment
- Code of Behaviour and discipline policy.
- Anti-bullying policy
- Health & Safety

- Administration of medication
- SPHE
- Substance use policy.
- Fire safety policy.
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy
- RSE Policy (Stay Safe Programme/Walk Tall programme/ Junior Cycle Programme).
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- Remote Learning Policy 2020

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:(Refer to Appendix A)

a) Physical contact – the boundaries have been acknowledged in our RSE policy. These are that all staff members are aware of our professional relationships with our students without being cold. We acknowledge that our children may initiate physical contact and we should behave appropriately in response.

b) Visitors/Guest speakers: The class teachers should be present in the event of a guest speaker to the class. All visitors (non-professional) must be always accompanied by a staff member.

c) Students with specific toileting/intimate care needs. Agreed plan with parents must be negotiated and revised each year if required. This is dealt with in our Intimate Care Policy.

d) Changing for Swimming: The changing rooms must be always supervised by staff. Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for games/PE/ swimming where possible. Where assistance is needed it will be necessary to have the consent of parents to change the pupil in the facilities provided by the leisure centre.

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 the principal and the parents/guardians.

e) Recruitment of staff: All recruitment procedures as outlined in Circular

0063/2010 will be followed.

f) General Conduct of staff and students – refer to school code of behaviour.

g) Supervision of pupils – The principal has drawn up timetables to ensure supervision at all breaks.

h) Internet Use – Acceptable Use Policy – refer to school policy.

i) Remote Learning policy. The school has a Remote Learning Policy which will be followed in the event of school closures. Staff will be in regular contact with parents and any concerns will be raised by staff with DLP or in her absence the DDLP.

This policy will also be considered with reference to the participation by pupils in sporting activities, other extra-curricular activities, and school outings. Other practices and activities, where child protection might have relevance, will consider the procedures outlined within this policy. 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.

Links to other policy / planning areas:

- Prevention: Child Safeguarding Statement (available on school website and server)
- SPHE curriculum, Strand Unit on ‘Safety and Protection’
- https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/462570f8-27cc-4f5b-a13ed1e2de8c18d2/PSEC06_SPHE_curriculum.pdf
- Junior Cycle Level 1, PLU Personal Care and Wellbeing
- <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/892c2232-4f91-486c-8e26-f1abbd58ae01/L1LPs-Guidelinesforteachers.pdf>
- Junior Cycle Level 2, PLU Personal Care
- <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/f03b2786-2e04-454e-b0b8-56e313ff62b2/11729-NCCA-Level-2-Guidelines-V5August-2014.pdf>
- <https://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Social%20Education.pdf>
- The School Code of Behaviour
- Procedures: Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy.

Remote Learning Policy 2020
COVID-19 Response Plan 2020

Child Protection Policy Guidance

Introduction

This document has been drawn up to give direction and guidance to school management and personnel in dealing with allegations/suspensions of child abuse and as a response to changes in legislation over a number of years.

In the interests of the welfare and protection of children, these guidelines must be followed at all times in dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse. These guidelines replace the 1991 guidelines that were issued to all primary schools and take account of the provisions of each of the following important pieces of legislation.

- The Child Care Act 1991
- Freedom of Information Act 1997
- The Education Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 1998 and Data Protection Amendment Act 2003
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- The Child Welfare Act 2000

Children First – National Guide dance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act

The issue of Child Protection is paramount in St. Dymphna's School. . This policy deals specifically with the area of abuse. However, the protection, safety and security of the pupils in St. Dymphna's School is a wider issue and catered for in other school policy documents.

These include

- Health & Safety Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Code of Behaviour & Discipline Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education policy (specifically Stay Safe

Programme/Walk Tall programme- currently under review.

- Pupil Attendance Policy

- Administration of medication
- School accident/injury policy
- Arrival and dismissal of pupils
- Intimate care and toileting
- Record Keeping/ Data protection
- Supervision
- Pupil work placements(to be reviewed - October 2021)
- Induction of Staff
- Tours/Trips
- CCTV Policy
- Data Protection policy
- Gardai vetting
- Remote Learning
- Covid Response plan

References

In all instances of suspicion or allegations of abuse or neglect, the following two resource books will be referenced.

“Children First” – Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011

“Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The Principal, Maureen Quinn, acts as DLP. Eileen Murphy is Deputy DLP. The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection and will represent the school in all dealings with Health Boards, NEWB, Social Services, An Garda Síochána and other parties in connection with allegations of abuse. All matters pertaining to the processing or investigation of child abuse should be processed through the DLP. Further information on the responsibilities of the DLP is included in ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools’ (DES Guidelines, 4.2.1 – 4.2.8)

Qualified Privilege

While the legal protection outlined above only applies to reports made to the appropriate authorities (i.e. The HSE and An Garda Síochána), Common Law qualified privilege continues to apply as heretofore. Consequently, should a Board of Management member or school personnel furnish information with regard to suspicions of child abuse to the DLP or the Board of Management

chairman, such communication would be regarded under common law as having qualified privilege.

A further definition of qualified privilege is outlined in the ‘Child Protection – Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools’ (DES 2011) 1.11 – 1.11.3

1.11.3 – “Furthermore those reporting a child’s disclosure or concerns about a child’s behaviour or welfare are not regarded as making an allegation as a matter of charge, but simply carrying out their duty in good faith. They are not accusing or bringing a charge.”

Freedom of Information Act 1997 & 2003

Reports made to the HSE may be subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, which enables members of the public to obtain access to personal information relating to them which is in the possession of public bodies. However the act also provides that public bodies may refuse access to information obtained by them in confidence.

Data Protection Acts, 1998 & 2003

These Acts protect the right of individuals with regard to personal data. They give a right to every individual, irrespective of nationality or residence, to establish the existence of personal data, to have access to any such data relating to him/her and to have inaccurate data rectified or erased.

See Child Protection – Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools’ (DES 2011) 1.13.1 – 1.13.2 for more information.

Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types

- neglect
- emotional abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse

A child may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time. Definitions for each form of abuse are detailed in ‘Children First’ – (Dept of Children & Youth Affairs) Chapter 2 Sections 2.1 – 2.9 pgs 8 – 12.

Summary of Abuse Categories

Neglect – Definition

- Omission – harm caused by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care.
- Harm – ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child.

Neglect – Recognition

- Generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point.

Emotional Abuse – Definition

Emotional Abuse is normally found in the relationships between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.

Examples include –

- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility, or blaming;
- Conditional parenting;
- Emotional unavailability of parent/guardian/carer;
- Unresponsiveness of parent/guardian/carer;
- Inappropriate expectations on the child;
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand; something or to behave or control himself/herself in a certain way;
- Under- or over-protection of a child;
- Failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development
- Use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology

Emotional Abuse – Recognition

- Can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour.

Physical Abuse – Definition

- That which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. Single or repeated incidents constitute physical abuse.
- It may involve:
 - Severe physical punishment;
 - Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking;
 - Pushing, shaking or throwing;
 - Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
 - Terrorising with threats;
 - Observing violence;
 - Use of excessive force in handling;

- Deliberate poisoning;
- Suffocation;
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Allowing or creating substantial risk of significant harm to a child

Physical Abuse – Recognition

- Through the observance and/or manifestation of an event of physical abuse

Sexual Abuse – Definition

- Occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. Examples of sexual abuse include:
 - Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;
 - Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
 - Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of the child in the act of masturbation;
 - Sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal;
 - Sexual exploitation of a child
 - Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person (under 17 years of age – male and female)

Guidelines for Recognition of Child Abuse

A list of child abuse indicators is contained in Appendix 1 ‘Children First’ 2011 – Appendix 1 pg 70 – 74. It is important to stress that, no one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse; it may indicate conditions other than child abuse. All signs and symptoms must be examined in the total context of the child’s situation and family circumstances.

There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse.

These are: –

- Considering the possibility
- Looking out for signs of abuse
- Recording of information

Each of these stages is developed in ‘Children First’ 2011 pg 10 & 11

Peer Abuse and Bullying

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child. Peer abuse is a complex area and all staff members of St. Dymphna’s NS are advised to familiarise themselves in this regard and with the advice in Chapter 9 of the Children First Guidelines.

Advice is given on the following issues;

- Sexual abuse by children and young people
- Normal Sexual Exploration
- Abuse Reactive Behaviour

- Sexually Obsessive Behaviour
- Abusive Behaviour by Adolescents and Young People

- Bullying – See our school’s Code of Behaviour & Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Dealing with disclosures from children

An abused child is likely to be under severe emotional stress and a member of staff may be the only adult whom the child is prepared to trust. Great care should be taken not to damage that trust. When information is offered in confidence the member of staff will need tact and sensitivity in responding to the disclosure. The member of staff will need to reassure the child, and retain his/her trust, while explaining the need for action and the possible consequences, which will necessarily involve other adults being informed.

It is important to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anyone else.

Listen & facilitate the child to tell about the problem – Don’t interview!

The following advice is offered to school personnel to whom a child makes a disclosure of abuse.

- Stay calm. Don’t show any extreme reaction!
- Listen to the child.
- Take all disclosures seriously.
- Do not ask any questions unless the nature of what he/she is saying is unclear.
- Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that?”
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises.
- Do not stop a child recalling significant events
- Explain that further help may have to be sought
- Record the disclosure immediately afterwards (using the child’s own words) and retain the record.
- This information should then be passed onto the DLP.

Record Keeping

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

School personnel should note

- What they observed and when they observed it
- Signs of physical injury (described in details and, if appropriate, sketched)
- Any comment by the child (or another person) about how an injury occurred (quoting words actually used)
- Sign and date your written record
- Give to the DLP who shall retain it.

Reporting Concerns and Standard Reporting Procedure

Responsibility to Report Child Abuse or Neglect

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect.

The HSE Children and Family services must always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

Child Protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of neglect or abuse.

A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to the HSE Children and Family Services.

Guiding Principles in Regard to Making a Report

1. The safety and well-being of the child must take priority;
2. Reports should be made without delay to the HSE Children & Family Services

Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child.

Any Professional who suspects child abuse should inform parents/carers if a report is to be submitted to the health Board or An Garda Síochána unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and a duty social worker is unavailable, Garda Síochána should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending Health Board intervention.

Reckless Endangerment of Children

Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of reckless endangerment of children. It states:

‘A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by –

a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or

b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.

The penalty is a fine (of no upper limit) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

Reporting of a Child Protection Concern

1. The Chairman of the Board of Management will be informed before the DLP makes contact with the relevant authorities unless the situation demands that more immediate action to be taken for the safety of the child in which case the Chairman may be informed after the report has been submitted.

2. If the DLP is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion/allegation of a child protection concern the HSE will be informed immediately, either in person, by phone or in writing.

The DLP or Deputy-DLP will generally report child abuse concerns by first making contact with TUSLA.

3. All reports will include as much as possible of the information sought in the Standard Reporting Form as outlined in section 3.5 of ‘Children First’.

The Standard Reporting Form may be photocopied from ‘Children First’ Appendix 3 – Pg 78 & 79.

4. A record will be made of the information communicated to the parent/guardian.

5. The DLP shall immediately, or as soon as possible thereafter, inform the Board of Management that a report involving a child in the school has been submitted to the HSE. No details of the report shall be disclosed to the Board of Management unless there are issues which need to be addressed by the Board of Management.

6. Where the HSE advises that a report should not be made, the DLP shall inform the Board of Management of this fact. No details of the report shall be disclosed to the Board of Management unless there are issues which need to be addressed by the Board of Management.

7. Any information or details that might identify a child should not be recorded in the minutes of Board of Management meetings.

8. If the DLP decides that the concerns of the member of staff should not be reported to the HSE, the member of staff shall be given a clear statement, in writing, as to the reasons why action is not being taken.

The member of staff will also be advised that if he/she remains concerned about the situation, he/she is free to consult with or report to the HSE (section 3.8.1 of Children First refers). He/She should use the Standard Reporting Form in Appendix 3 of these procedures.

9. Where a child transfers from or leaves a school (including transfers from primary to post-primary) and where the DLP is aware that a child protection report relating to that child has been made to the HSE in the past, the DLP should inform TUSLA of the child's transfer/move.

Allegations or Suspicions Re: School Employees (including unpaid volunteers)

The most important consideration for the Chairperson, Board of Management or the DLP is the safety and protection of the child. However Employees also have a right to protection against claims, which are false or malicious. Each school also has a duty and responsibility as an employer, in respect of its employees. A school employee may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore, any allegation of abuse or neglect shall be dealt with sensitively and support, including counselling, should be provided for staff where necessary. The employee shall be treated fairly which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry.

As employers, the Board of Management should seek legal advice as the circumstances can vary from one case to another.

There are two procedures to be followed (Chapter 5 'Child Protection – Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary School' DES 2011)

I. The Reporting Procedure

II. The Procedure for Dealing with the Employee.

The DLP has responsibility for reporting the matter to the HSE. The Chairperson, Board of Management has responsibility, acting in consultation with his/her board, for addressing the employment issues.

If the allegation or suspicion of child abuse is against the DLP and/or Deputy DLP, the Board of Management Chairperson will assume the responsibility for reporting the matter to the HSE.

If the allegation or suspicion of child abuse is against a member of the Board of Management, the Board of Management will inform the patron that a report involving a member of the Board of Management has been submitted to the HSE.

It is a matter for the patron to determine if any action is necessary regarding the member's continued role on the Board.

Reporting

The same person will not have responsibility for dealing with the reporting issue and the employment issue.

DLP will take responsibility for reporting while the employer will take responsibility for the employment issue.

When an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee, the DLP should immediately act in accordance with the procedures outlined in section 4.2 of the Child Protection – Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools (DES 2011) and as outlined in St. Dymphna's School policy.

A written statement of the allegation should be sought from the person/agency making the report as soon as possible. If a child wishes to make a written statement, this should be allowed.

The DLP should always inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Board of Management whether or not the matter is being reported to the HSE.

School employees, other than the DLP who receive allegations against another school employee, should immediately report the matter to the DLP.

School employees who form suspicions regarding conduct of another school employee should consult with the DLP. The procedures outlined in Section 4.1 – Child Protection – Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools' (DES 2011) will be followed.

Action to be taken by the employer

- The matter should be treated with the strictest of confidence.
- The employee, the chairperson and DLP should privately make the employees aware that;
 - a) an allegation has been made against him/her
 - b) the nature of the allegation
 - c) whether or not the matter has been reported to the HSE (either by the DLP or the Chairperson)

- The employee should be given a copy of the written allegation and any other relevant documentation while ensuring appropriate measures are in place to protect the child.
- Once reported to the HSE, the employee shall be offered the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing to the Board of Management within a specified period and told that this would also have to be passed to the Gardaí, HSE, and legal advisors.
- Where the employer is unsure whether the nature of the allegation warrants the absence of the employee from the school while the matter is being investigated,

the employer should consult the HSE and/or Garda Síochána for advice as to the action that those authorities would consider necessary. Following those consultations, the employer shall have due regard to the advice offered. If, in the opinion of the employer, the nature of the allegation warrants immediate action or the ratification of action taken under the protocol referred to in section 5.2 above, the employer shall direct that the employee absent himself/herself from the school with immediate effect. The principles of natural justice and fair procedures shall be applied.

– The employer shall maintain regular and close liaison with the HSE or An Garda Síochána and a decision on the position of the school employee shall be taken having due regard to the advice given to the employer by these authorities.

– Where the employer has directed an employee to absent himself/herself from the school, such an absence would not imply any degree of guilt on the part of the school employee. Where such an absence is directed, the Department of Education and Skills shall immediately be contacted with regard to

- a) formal approval for the payment of remuneration or ex-gratia payments in lieu of remuneration as appropriate, and
- b) departmental sanction for the employment of a substitute teacher where necessary.

Further Follow up

– The employer should take care to ensure that actions taken do not frustrate any assessment/investigation being conducted by the HSE or An Garda Síochána. A close liaison should be maintained at all times.

– Any further follow up will accord with established disciplinary procedures and shall only be made following consultation with the HSE and An Garda Síochána, if involved.

– After the above consultation has taken place and when dealing with the question of the future position of the employee, the employer shall advise the employee of the situation and shall follow the agreed procedures. The Department of Education and Skills shall be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX A

School Measures Taken to Protect the Children in Our Care

There are a number of areas where common sense in our school should prevail in order to protect the children in the school and the staff who care for them. In relation to this, certain points should be noted:

St. Dymphna's school will undertake an annual review of its Child Protection Policy and its implementation by the school. A checklist, to be used in undertaking the review (included at Appendix 1). The school will put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement which might be identified in the annual review. The Board of Management shall make arrangements to inform school personnel that the review has been undertaken. Written notification that the review has been undertaken shall be provided to the Parent Association. A record of the review and its outcome shall be made available, if requested, to the patron and the DES.

It should be noted that children with disabilities may be more at risk of abuse due to a number of reasons (DES Procedures 2:3). Parents, teachers and all staff involved in services for children with disabilities need to be familiar with the indicators of abuse and to be alert for signs of abuse.

Child Protection Practices

The staff and BoM of this school have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to Child Protection. Following discussion and consultation, the staff and BoM have agreed that the following practices be adopted:

- 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.

School personnel should never engage in or allow:

- The use of inappropriate language or behaviours
- Physical punishment of any kind
- Sexually provocative games or suggestive comments about or to a child
- The use of sexually explicit or pornographic material

All media products (CDs, DVDs etc.) should be checked for their appropriateness with regard to age and suitability.

Visiting Teachers

Appropriately appointed and screened visiting teachers of varying disciplines, engaged by the BoM of St. Dymphna's school to perform specific duties, will be left to work with a class alone at the Principal's discretion

Visitors/guest speakers

Visitors/Guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The school (Principal/ teachers) have a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use is appropriate.

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. Further meetings will be organised to take into account the age and changing needs of the pupils
- Two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care/toileting needs. Any deviation from the agreed procedure will be recorded and notified to the DLP and the parents/guardians.

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, 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.

Accidents

While every precaution will be taken under our Health and Safety Statement to ensure the safety of children, we realise that accidents will happen. Accidents will be noted in an Incident report and will be addressed under our Accident Policy as part of Health and Safety.

Changing for games/PE/Swimming

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for Games/PE/Swimming. Where assistance is needed, this will be done in the communal area and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff be expected, or allowed, to dress/undress a child unsupervised in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required, the parents/guardians of the child will be asked to assist the child. St. Dymphna's School will have two members of staff in changing areas.

The BoM of St. Dymphna's School has all swimming volunteers vetted. Parents who come swimming work with, and change their own child.(If required) 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 the Principal and parents.

Attendance

Our school attendance will be monitored as per our attendance policy. With regards 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.

Behaviour

Children are 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.

Bullying

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying policy. If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive, then the matter will be referred to the DLP.

Children travelling in staff cars

Members of the school staff will not carry children in their cars at any time.

Communication

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral Language/RE programmes allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which is hoped will aid the pupil-teacher relationship. If teachers have to communicate with pupils on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open or request a colleague to attend.

Induction of Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Child Protection Procedures (DES, 2011) and Children First Guidelines (2011), but particularly the Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). All new teachers are expected to teach the appropriate SPHE objectives for their class. The Deputy Principal will be responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives.

Induction of Pupils

All parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). All parents will be informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development e.g. RSE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe and SPHE. All new parents will be given a copy of the school's enrolment policy, which outlines the procedures parents and children should use when contacting the school if there are absences or concerns of an educational/personal/family matter. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress. All parents will be given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

Internet Safety

It is the intention of the Principal and Staff at St. Dymphna's to ensure that child protection concerns will be addressed in the school's Acceptable Use Policy as part of its Information and Communication Technology policy. The Stay Safe lessons in each classroom may be supplemented with appropriate resources.

Record Keeping

Teachers will keep pupils records in a locked filing cabinet in a locked storeroom. Roll books will be updated daily. Sensitive information regarding children will be shared on a need-to-know basis. All educational files of pupils who no longer attend this school are kept in a filing cabinet in the locked storeroom. Further details on record keeping will be found in the school's Record Keeping Policy.

Supervision

The school's supervision policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks. A rota will be displayed to

cover 11 o'clock and lunchtime breaks. See Supervision Policy for agreed rules around break-times and procedures around teacher absences.

Visibility

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

Letter to parents/guardians

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In recent years, as a society, we have become very aware of the problem of child abuse through neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Each one of us has a duty to protect children and Children First, the National Guidelines, for the Protection and Welfare of Children noted that teachers, who are the main care givers to children outside the family, are particularly well placed to observe and monitor children for signs of abuse.

In response to this, the Department of Education and Skills published procedures for all schools in relation to child protection and welfare. These guidelines promote the safety and welfare of all children and are to be welcomed.

The Board of Management of St. Dymphna's school has adopted these guidelines as school policy. Consequently, if school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child abuse, they are obliged to refer this matter to the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

Children First, the National Guidelines for the Protection of Children may be assessed on the website of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (www.dcyia.ie) and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures can be read on the Department's website (www.education.ie). Parents/Guardians are also welcome to look through the guidelines here at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Maureen Quinn

Principal

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. The BoM may wish to include other items in the checklist that are of particular relevance to St. Dymphna's school and reserves the right to do so if/when the need occurs.

1.	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	YES	NO
2.	Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
3.	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'?	YES	NO
4.	Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	YES	NO
5.	Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	YES	NO
6.	Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	YES	NO
7.	Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	YES	NO
8.	Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	YES	NO
9.	Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?	YES	NO
10.	Has the Board ensured that the Department's 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' are available to all school personnel?	YES	NO
11.	Does the Board have arrangements in place to communicate the school's child protection policy to new school personnel?	YES	NO
12.	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'?	YES	NO
13.	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?	YES	NO
14.	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?	YES	NO
15.	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?	YES	NO
16.	Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	YES	NO

17.	Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	YES	NO
18.	Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	YES	NO

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is on the school's website 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.

Ratification of Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management Principal

Date: _____ Date: _____

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis at the first Board of Management meeting of each academic year or earlier if the need arises.

Date of next review: September 2023

The Board further endorses the Principal, Maureen Quinn as the school DLP and Eileen Murphy as Deputy DLP.

On behalf of the Board of Management:

_____ (Chairperson)

Date: _____

DLP Person

Maureen Quinn

Deputy DLP

Eileen Murphy

**Garda Station Ballina
Telephone: 096- 21422**

**Local Contact For
'The Children and Family Social Services of the HSE'**

MAYO	Ballina Social Work Team, Ballina Health Centre, Mercy Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo	(096) 21511 (096) 24841
		(094) 902 2283
	Castlebar Social Work Team, St Mary's Headquarters, Castlebar,	(094) 905 0133
	Co. Mayo Swinford Social Work Team, Swinford Health Centre, Aras Attracta, Swinford, Co. Mayo	

