

Please contact the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for any Child Protection Related Concerns:

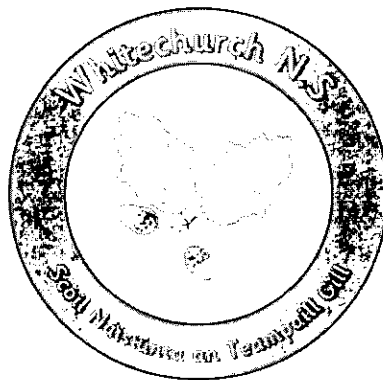
DLP: Sarah Richards (Principal)

Phone ext. 214

DeputyDLP: Judy Brown (Deputy Principal)

Phone ext. 206

Child Safeguarding Statement



September 2023

Whitechurch National School Child Safeguarding Statement

(Mandatory Template 1)

Whitechurch National School is a primary school providing primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Addendum to Children First (2019), the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of [insert school name] has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

- 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 (revised 2023)* as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement
- 2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Sarah Richards.
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Judy Brown.
- 4 The Relevant Person is Sarah Richards
(The relevant person is one who can provide information in respect of how the child safeguarding statement was developed and will be able to provide the statement on request. In a school setting the relevant person shall be the designated liaison person.)
- 5 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, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the 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 comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- 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.

6 The following procedures/measures are in place:

- In relation to any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child attending the school, the school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the gov.ie website.
- In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, the school adheres to the statutory vetting requirements of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 and to the wider duty of care guidance set out in relevant Garda vetting and recruitment circulars published by the Department of Education and available on the gov.ie website.
- In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to staff in respect of the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) the school-
 - Has provided each member of staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
 - Encourages Board of Management members to avail of relevant training
 - The Board of Management maintains records of all staff and Board member training
- In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)*, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.
- All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.
- In accordance with the Children First Act 2015 and the Addendum to Children First (2019), the Board has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the school or participating in school activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the school's procedures for managing those risks is included with the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school's website, the gov.ie website or will be made available on request by the school.

Note: The above is not intended as an exhaustive list. Individual Boards of Management shall also include in this section such other procedures/measures that are of relevance to the school in question. Please see additional school information in relation to procedures/ measures in the following pages.

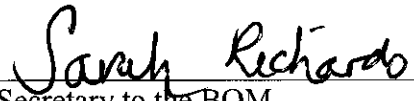
- 7 This statement has been published on the school's website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parents' Association (if any) and the patron. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla and the Department if requested.
- 8 This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on 18/10/23 [date].

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on 18/10/23 [most recent review date].

Signed: 
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 18/10/23

Signed: 
Principal/Secretary to the BOM

Date: 18/10/23

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Appendix 2: Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

Appendix 3: Notification regarding the Board of Management's review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

Appendix 4: Whitechurch National School's specific procedures in relation to: recruitment and selection of staff, general conduct, toileting/intimate care, changing for games/activities, supervision of pupils, one to one teaching, visitors/guests.

Appendix 5: Reference guide to the four types of abuse- Neglect, Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse.

Appendix 6: Reasonable Grounds for Concern

Appendix 7: Circumstances which give rise to concern

Appendix 8: When a Child Makes a Disclosure

Appendix 9: Role of Designated Liaison Person

Appendix 10: Record Keeping

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Appendix 12: Child Protection Oversight Report to Board of Management

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Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of Whitechurch National School

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirement of Chapter 8 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Whitechurch National School

1. List of school activities	2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities –	3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment -
Training of school personnel in Child Protection matters	Harm not recognised or reported promptly	<p>Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures provided to all staff</p> <p>DLP& DDLP to attend PDST face to face training</p> <p>All Staff to view Túsla training module & any other online training offered by PDST</p> <p>School personnel are required to adhere to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary Schools.</p> <p>All registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the Children First Act 2015.</p> <p>BOM annually records all instances of staff and board training</p>
One to one teaching	Harm by school personnel	<p>School has policy in place for one to one teaching</p> <p>Open doors</p> <p>Table between teacher and pupil whenever possible</p> <p>Blind up on window/glass panel in door</p>
Care of Children with special needs, including intimate care needs	Harm by school personnel	<p>School has procedures in place for intimate care. See Appendix 4 of Child Safeguarding Statement (formerly Child Protection Policy).</p> <p>School has a Special Educational Needs Policy in place.</p>

Whitechurch National School Child Safeguarding Statement

Toilet areas	Inappropriate behaviour	Usage and supervision policy All pupils must use the toilet on their own. Toileting and intimate care procedures in place. See Appendix of Child Safeguarding Statement (formerly Child Protection Policy)
Curricular Provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay safe.	Non-teaching of same	School implements SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe in full All teachers required to record teaching of same in their monthly progress reports. Where possible teachers co-ordinate the teaching of each programme at the same time throughout the school eg.one term
LGBT Children/Pupils perceived to be LGBT potentially	Bullying	Anti-Bullying Policy Code of Behaviour
Student interaction	Bullying, harm to pupils by other pupils	Anti- Bullying Policy Code of Behaviour Mobile Phone Policy Education about bullying Anti- Bullying Week
Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils	Harm from older pupils, unknown adults on the playground	Dismissal supervised by Teachers and SNA's. Children come inside directly and don't congregate externally for long periods in the mornings.
Managing of challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use of restraint	Injury to pupils and staff	Restraint Policy Health & Safety Policy Code Of Behaviour
Sports Coaches	Harm to pupils	Policy & Procedures in place Garda Vetting Visitors are not left alone with pupils.

Students participating in work experience	Harm by student	Work experience procedures in place. Child Safeguarding Statement is shown to people on work experience. People on work experience are never left on their own with pupils. Garda Vetting from 16 years. Student Teacher/ Teaching Practice Policy.
Recreation breaks for pupils	Harm to pupils	Yard rules. Code of Behaviour. Anti-Bullying Policy. Supervised at all times by staff members.
Classroom teaching	Harm to pupils	Garda Vetting of staff. CPD. Teaching Council Professional Code of Conduct. Code of Behaviour.
Outdoor teaching activities	Harm to pupils	Boundaries. Adequate Supervision. In Groups. Teaching of Stay Safe Programme. Health and Safety. Rules of the road. Walking Buddy Systems.
Sporting Activities	Harm to pupils	Inclusion ensured. Supervision. Rules in place- Code of Behaviour.
School outings	Harm to pupils	School tour policy. Adequate supervision in place. Male/Female separation for changing clothes. Critical Incident Management Policy.
School trips involving overnight stay	Harm to pupils	School tour policy. Supervision. Male/Female separation for changing clothes and for sleeping/showering arrangements. Garda vetting of supervisors.
Fundraising events involving pupils	Harm to pupils	Adequate Supervision-school ensures staff members are present to supervise if activity takes place during the school day. If the event is outside of normal school hours, parents/guardians are required to be present.

Use of off-site facilities for school activities	Harm to pupils	Swimming and Hockey. Ensure proper procedures are in place. Copies of Garda Vetting disclosures are requested and held by the school. Child Safeguarding Statements from outside organisations are requested and held by the school.
School transport arrangements	Harm to pupils	Supervision of pupils by staff members. Buses – garda vetting of drivers confirmed by bus company. Pupils are not left on their own with driver.
Administration of Medicine Administration of First Aid	Harm to pupils	Administration of Medication, Accident/Injury policy See Toileting policy See Appendix of Child Safeguarding Statement (formerly Child Protection Policy)
Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils	Harm to pupils	Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures in place. We are a "Telling School". Education programmes in all classes.
Use of external personnel to supplement curriculum	Harm to pupils	Garda Vetting of Sports coaches. Child Safeguarding Statement provided to and read by external coaches.
Use of Information and Communication Technology/ Social Media by staff	Inappropriate material/ communications	AUP for all school staff.
Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/ needs such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants • Members of the Traveller community • Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children • Pupils perceived to be LGBT • Pupils of minority religious faiths 	Harm to pupils	Vigilance & Observation – staff awareness Confidentiality- Information shared only on a need to know basis. Inclusive Ethos of school. Encouragement of respect for diversity.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in care Children on CPNS 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of school personnel including - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers SNA's Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners Sports coaches External Tutors/Guest Speakers Volunteers/Parents in school activities Visitors/contractors present in school during school hours Visitors/contractors present during after school activities 	Harm not recognised or properly or promptly reported	<p>Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures provided to and made available to all staff</p> <p>Staff to view Tusla training module & any other online training offered by PDST</p> <p>Vetting Procedures</p> <p>Policy of Parents / Volunteers</p> <p>Visitors are always supervised by a member of staff and never left on their own with pupils.</p> <p>The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff and SNAs.</p>	
Use of school premises by other organisations	Harm to pupils / other children	<p>Use of school premises by other organisations Policy.</p> <p>Supervision, Vetting</p> <p>Each organisation needs to update their Child Safeguarding Statement and the school will hold copies on file (by 11/3/18).</p> <p>PTA Extra Curricular Activities Liaison Person.</p>	
Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils <u>in school</u>	Bullying. Accessing inappropriate material Addictions/Overuse	<p>ICT policy</p> <p>Anti-Bullying Policy</p> <p>Code of Behaviour</p> <p>AUP for pupils and staff</p> <p>Supervision, Internet Filtering</p>	
Student teachers undertaking training placement in school	Harm to pupils	<p>Garda vetting</p> <p>Induction pack- Child Protection Procedures and policy. Supervised by class teacher</p>	

Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour	Harm to pupils	Code of Behaviour is thorough and reviewed regularly to ensure it meets DES procedures and best practice. Children who may very occasionally be required to stay inside at break time (a sanction) to go to First Aid Room where they are supervised. Children never stay on their own in a classroom.
Board of Management	Harm to pupils. Child protection procedures not followed correctly.	Board of Management members: Are Garda vetted where applicable Attend relevant training Maintains a record of training Oversees development and review of Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment in line with DES procedures Ensures that a Child Safeguarding Oversight report is heard at each BOM meeting
Use of video/photography/other media to record school events	Risk of unauthorised distribution of video footage/photographs of pupils	Permission sought from parents/ guardians. Lists maintained of parents/children who do not have permission for photographs/video.
Online teaching and learning remotely	Risk of harm due to inappropriate use of online remote teaching and learning communication platform such as an uninvited person accessing the lesson link, students being left unsupervised for long periods of time in breakout rooms	Break out rooms are not used unless a staff member is part of them. Online video links only accessible by those invited. Policy and Procedures in place for online teaching and learning- see AUP.

Important Note: It should be noted that risk in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of "harm" as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and not general health and safety risk. The definition of harm is set out in Chapter 4 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017*

Procedures to address risks of harm

- All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school's *Child Safeguarding Statement*
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* are made available to all school personnel
- School Personnel are required to adhere to the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the *Children First Act 2015* and it's Addendum (2019)
- The school implements in full the Stay Safe Programme
- The school implements in full the SPHE curriculum
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which fully adheres to the requirements of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*
- The school undertakes anti-racism awareness initiatives
- The school has a yard/playground supervision policy to ensure appropriate supervision of children during, assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc.
- The school has in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of school outings
- The school has a Health and safety policy
- The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DE circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting
- The school has a codes of conduct for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff)
- The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
- The school has a Special Educational Needs policy
- The school has an intimate care policy/plan in respect of students who require such care
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the administration of medication to pupils
- The school –
 - Has provided each member of school staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
 - Encourages board of management members to avail of relevant training

- Maintains records of all staff and board member training
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the administration of First Aid
- The school has in place a code of behaviour for pupils
- The school has an Acceptable Use Policy in place, to include provision for online teaching and learning remotely, and has communicated this policy to parents
- The school has in place a policy governing the use of smart phones and tablet devices in the school by pupils as per circular 38/2018
- The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan
- The school has in place procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum
- The school has in place procedures for the use of external sports coaches
- The school has in place a policy and clear procedures for one-to-one teaching activities
- The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of student teacher placements
- The school has in place procedures in respect of students undertaking work experience in the school

Important Note: It should be noted that risk in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of “harm” as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and not general health and safety risk. The definition of harm is set out in Chapter 4 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*. In undertaking this risk assessment, the board of management has endeavoured to identify as far as possible the risks of harm that are relevant to this school and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage all risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, the school has in place the procedures listed in this risk assessment to manage and reduce risk to the greatest possible extent.

This risk assessment was initially completed by the Board of Management on 30th January 2018 It will be reviewed and updated as part of the school’s annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed:  Date: 18/10/23

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:  Date: 18/10/23
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Appendix 2: Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) require that the Board of Management must undertake a review of its Child Safeguarding Statement and that the following checklist shall be used for this purpose. **The review must be completed every year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the Child Safeguarding Statement refers.** Undertaking an annual review will also ensure that a school also meets its statutory obligation under section 11(8) of the Children First Act 2015, to review its Child Safeguarding Statement every two years.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list of the issues to be considered. Individual Boards of Management shall include other items in the checklist that are of relevance to the school in question.

As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess relevant school policies, procedures, 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 Safeguarding Statement, the Children First Act 2015, the Addendum to Children First (2019) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023).

	Yes/No
1. Has the Board formally adopted a Child Safeguarding Statement in accordance with the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> ?	Yes
2. Is the Board satisfied that the Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed in a prominent place near the main entrance to the school?	Yes
3. As part of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> ?	Yes
4. Does the school's Child Safeguarding Statement include a written assessment of risk as required under the Children First Act 2015? (This includes considering the specific issue of online safety as required by the Addendum to Children First)	Yes
5. Has the Board reviewed and updated where necessary the written assessment of risk as part of this overall review?	Yes
6. Has the Risk Assessment taken account of the risk of harm relevant to online teaching and learning remotely?	Yes
7. Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	Yes
8. Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	Yes
9. Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	Yes
10. Has the school appointed a DLP and a Deputy DLP?	Yes
11. Are the relevant contact details (Tusla and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	Yes
12. Has the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school's Child Safeguarding Statement to new school personnel?	Yes
13. Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> and the Children First Act 2015?	Yes.

14. Has the Board received a Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) at each Board meeting held since the last review was undertaken?	Yes
15. Since the Board's last review, did each CPOR contain all of the information required under each of the 4 headings set out in sections 9.5 to 9.8 inclusive of the procedures?	Yes
16. Since the Board's last review, has the Board been provided with and reviewed all records relevant to the CPOR?	Yes
17. Is the Board satisfied that the records provided are anonymised and redacted as necessary to ensure that the identities of children and any other parties, including school personnel, to whom the concern or report relates are not disclosed?	Yes
18. Since the Board's last review, have the minutes of each Board meeting appropriately recorded the records provided to the Board as part of CPOR?	Yes
19. Have the minutes of each Board meeting appropriately recorded the CPOR?	Yes
20. Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to Tusla/An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed in each case reviewed?	Yes
21. Is the Board satisfied that, since the last review, all appropriate actions are being or have been taken in respect of any member of school personnel against whom an allegation of abuse or neglect has been made?*	N/A
22. Where applicable, were unique identifiers used to record child protection matters in the Board minutes?	Yes
23. Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	Yes
24. Has the Board been notified by any parent in relation to that parent not receiving the standard notification required under section 5.6 of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> ?	No
25. In relation to any cases identified at question 20 above, has the Board ensured that any notifications required under section 5.6 of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> were subsequently issued by the DLP?	Yes
26. Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), has been provided with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	Yes
27. Has the Board ensured that the patron has been provided with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	Yes
28. Has the Board ensured that the school's Child Safeguarding Statement is available to parents on request?	Yes
29. Has the Board ensured that the Stay Safe programme is implemented in full in the school? (applies to primary schools)	Yes
30. Has the Board ensured that the Wellbeing Programme for Junior Cycle students is implemented in full in the school? (applies to post-primary schools)	N/A
31. Has the Board ensured that the SPHE curriculum is implemented in full in the school?	Yes
32. Is the Board satisfied that the statutory requirements for Garda Vetting have been met in respect of all school personnel (employees and volunteers)? *	Yes
33. 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?*	Yes
34. 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)?*	Yes
35. Has the Board considered and addressed any complaints or suggestions for improvements regarding the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	Yes
36. Has the Board sought the feedback of parents in relation to the school's compliance with the requirements of the child safeguarding requirements of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> ?	Yes
37. Has the Board sought the feedback of pupils in relation to the school's child safeguarding arrangements?	Yes
38. Is the Board satisfied that the ' <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> ' are being fully and adequately implemented by the school?	Yes
39. Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
40. Has the Board put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement?	N/A
41. Has the Board ensured that any areas for improvement that were identified in any previous review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement have been adequately addressed?	N/A

This review was completed by the Board of Management at its meeting held on : 18/10/23

*In schools where the ETB is the employer, the responsibility for meeting the employer's requirements rests with the ETB concerned. In such cases, this question should be completed following consultation with the ETB.

Signed  Date 18/10/23

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed Sarah Richards. Date 18/10/23.

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Note: Where a school is undertaking its first review, references in this checklist to the "last review" shall be taken to refer to the date on which the Child Safeguarding Statement was first put in place.

Appendix 3: Notification regarding the Board of Management's review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

To: All Members of Whitechurch N.S. Community.

The Board of Management of Whitechurch NS wishes to inform you that:

The Board of Management's annual review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement was completed at the Board meeting of 18/10/23 [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the "Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement" published on the Department's website www.education.ie

Signed: [Signature] Date: 18/10/23

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Sarah Richards. Date: 18/10/23

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Appendix 4: Whitechurch N.S. Child Protection Good Practice Procedures and Guidelines

Introduction:

The following items are a description of the current practices carried out by all staff members of Whitechurch National School in areas where child protection issues may arise. These guidelines and procedures have been drawn up through a collaborative process by all the teaching staff following a specific meeting to discuss the area of good practice in relation to child protection.

Rationale:

The school has chosen to describe our good practice guidelines and procedures in relation to child protection in order to:

- ensure that child protection is the foremost concern in the day to day organisation of school activities
- clarify procedures for all existing and new staff members.

Contents:

- A. Recruitment and Selection of Staff**
- B. General Conduct**
- C. Toileting/Intimate Care**
- D. Changing for Games/Activities**
- E. Supervision of Pupils**
- F. One to One Teaching**
- G. Visitors/Guests**

A. Recruitment and Selection of Staff

The recruitment of staff and volunteers is crucial to ensuring that those working with the children in the school are safe adults in so far as this can be determined.

Recruitment of Staff:

All staff recruited by the Board of Management are required to undergo Garda vetting. A completed and signed Child Protection related statement is also a necessary condition of employment. References are sought and verified for all potential employees. At the interview stage, particular focus is paid to matters relating to child protection- understanding and knowledge, training, and suitability/ clean record.

Staff regularly receive training in Child Protection and are made aware of the school's policy in relation to child protection.

Recruitment of volunteers:

Whitechurch National School greatly values the support of parents/ guardians/ other volunteers in helping to provide the best possible educational experience for our pupils. It is school policy to require that any volunteer who assists regularly at the school eg. helping with reading, assisting on school tours etc. be Garda vetted. All new parents to the school are strongly encouraged to complete and return a Garda vetting form.

Relevant policies:

- Garda Vetting Policy

- Health and Safety Policy

B. General Conduct

Whitechurch NS recognises that there is a need, reflected in common law, to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to its pupils, staff and property. As a general rule, any physical contact between school personnel and the child should be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult. While physical contact can be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child the following factors should be used in assessing its appropriateness:

- It is acceptable to the child concerned
- It is open and not secretive
- It is appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child

School personnel should not do things of a personal nature for a child which the child can do for him/herself. All children should be treated with equal respect – favouritism is not acceptable.

School personnel should never engage in or allow:

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

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the use of the Internet in school. All media products should be checked for their appropriateness with regard to age and suitability as outlined in our Acceptable Use Policy.

The Board of Management will ensure that all school personnel are familiar with the DES guidelines on child protection and that these are adhered to in the event of concerns or disclosures around child protection. The Designated Liaison Person should be notified promptly of any concerns with regard to the behaviour of a staff member or any allegations of abuse made by a child or an adult.

(See our Child Protection Policy).

C. Toileting/Intimate Care

Children with specific toileting/ intimate care needs:

School personnel should not do things of a personal nature for a child which the child can do for him/herself. Normally a child who has specific toileting needs will have a special needs assistant assigned to him/her. It is very important that, before the child is enrolled in the school, a meeting is held at which all school personnel involved with the child attend along with the parents/guardians. At the meeting the needs of the child should be addressed and agreement reached as to how the school can meet those needs. It is important that those involved with the intimate care of the child agree practices which are acceptable to the staff, the child and the parents. Practices agreed should be sufficiently flexible to cover unforeseen situations, e.g. if personnel involved in assisting the child are absent.

Toileting 'Accidents':

Pupils should be toilet trained before they start school. However, it is possible that any child may have a toilet accident. The school has a selection of spare clothes that children can change into if needed. Clothes must be washed, dried and returned to school as soon

as possible. If a child has a wetting accident during the school day, the child can go to the bathroom to change his/her clothes. Children will be encouraged to assist themselves as much as possible and where possible an older sibling may be contacted to assist. A member of staff will only assist if absolutely necessary. Parents are required to attend school urgently should a child soil themselves. Parents should make every effort to come to school to change their child, and should bring a clean set of clothing.

D. Changing for Games/Activities

Parents/guardians are asked that children wear suitable clothing and footwear that they can manage independently e.g. shoes with Velcro fastenings, easily manageable fastenings on coats and trousers. Where children need assistance with changing because of toileting needs appropriate support will be given according to the age and needs of the child. (See section on Toileting/Intimate care). Staff will only assist with anything of a personal nature that the child cannot do for themselves. Instances where children require a change of clothing include school tours and the school pantomime. Children will be offered privacy and supervision to change according to their gender, age and any particular needs they may have. Two adults should be present while children are changing at an “out-of-school” event and in as much as possible, offer privacy and only assist where necessary. Parents/guardians will be advised in advance of school trips that require a change of clothing. Parents/guardians will be advised that vetted volunteers may help their children with changing if required. If vetted volunteers are involved, such as on school tours, they will be made aware of the Best Practice in Child Protection: changing for games/activities. Where a child requires assistance with changing, an agreement will be made between staff and parents. Any incident will be reported to the school principal, parents/guardians and the Board of Management.

E. Supervision of Pupils

Arrangements for adequate supervision of children is organised as follows so as to avoid opportunities for peer abuse, bullying and victimisation.

A supervision rota for teaching staff and SNAs is drawn up before the start of each school year covering supervision of pupils:

- in the yard at break times
- in the classroom during wet breaks
- in 6th Class classroom for toileting/First Aid during break times.

Any accidents that take place while children are under the supervision of school staff are recorded in the incident folder in the school office. Any other incidents that take place while children are under the supervision of school staff are recorded in a blue notebook in the relevant child’s classroom.

- Arrangements for supervision during school trips are as follows:
 - staff or parents must never take children on their own in their car during school trips.

- parents who assist with transport for school trips must be Garda vetted.
- the ratio of adults to children during school tours is dependent on venue and supervision provided there but must be a minimum of 1:15 for 1st to 6th class and 1:10 for Infants.
- Supervision of pupils at the start of the school day
 - the Board of Management does not allow parents or children to enter the school grounds/premises prior to 8.10am.
 - no formal supervision of pupils by school staff takes place prior to 8.10am.
- Supervision of pupils at the end of the school day
 - a supervision rota for teaching staff and SNAs is drawn up before the start of each school year covering supervision of pupils at collection times at the end of the school day.
 - parents are asked to inform the class teacher if pupils are to be collected by someone unknown to staff.
 - if a court order is in place which prevents someone from having access to a child, an up to date copy of that order should be provided by the parents/guardians to the school.

F. One to One Teaching

Provided it is deemed appropriate for an individual, one to one teaching may be provided. This usually takes place as part of ongoing provision for Learning Support/ Resource teaching. At times, where a child is experiencing difficulties with a particular topic/ concept, or if their skills are significantly less than that of their peer group, one off individual tutoring may be provided. Parents/ Guardians are notified of arrangements for one to one teaching plans at the start of each school year in accordance with their child's IEP/ IPLP.

A timetable showing where the child is located (classroom) and with whom (staff member) is visible in the front office at all times.

The physical environment where one to one teaching/ support takes place is set up to ensure child protection is paramount. Any staff member engaging in one to one teaching/ support does so only in a room/ area that is visible to others eg. glass panel in door, or door open, or area such as foyer or corridor. Whenever possible, a table is between the teacher and pupil. The physical environment is set up in such a way as to ensure the child and staff member are at all times visible.

If a child is withdrawn by any other member of staff, the classroom teacher is informed of where the child will be and for how long.

G. Visitors/ Guests

All visitors to the school must report to the school office upon arrival. The school secretary ensures that no visitor is left on their own in the school. If the visitor is there to carry out maintenance works then either the school secretary or the caretaker will supervise their work.

In the event of a visitor/guest speaker coming to the school, appropriate staff members must always be present with the group of children in his/her presence e.g. if a guest speaker is speaking in front of 1st and 2nd class, the class teacher(s) and SNAs assigned to those classes must stay in the vicinity of the pupils and guest speaker. Visitors/guest speakers should never be left alone with the pupils.

It is the responsibility of the school (BOM/principal/class teacher) to check the credentials of a new visitor/guest speaker. This is to ensure that the content/material in use is appropriate. If the content/material in use is deemed inappropriate by the staff members present, it is their responsibility to intervene and stop the visitor/guest speaker from presenting the content/material further.

Appendix 5: Reference Guide to the 4 Types of Abuse- Neglect, Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse

1. Neglect

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect

Neglect is associated with poverty, but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Lack of adequate clothing
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Abandonment or desertion
- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age.

2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of comfort and love
- Ongoing family conflicts and violence
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. play)
- Bullying
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Continuous lack of praise/encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Conditional parenting where care/affection of a child depends on child's behaviour/ actions
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Very inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development.

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors

3. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation.

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

4. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms. There is no reasonable threshold for sexual abuse.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body 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 a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
 - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography (for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation for those purposes of an image by computer or other means]
 - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in or to observe any sexual, indecent or obscene act
 - Showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse.

Appendix 6: Reasonable Grounds for Concern

The Reasonable Grounds for Concern (threshold of harm) are:

Neglect

The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child's needs have been neglected, are being neglected, or are at risk of being neglected to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Emotional Abuse/Ill-Treatment

The threshold of harm at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Physical Abuse

The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being assaulted and that as a result the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Sexual Abuse

If as a mandated person, you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being sexually abused, then you must report this to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015. As all sexual abuse falls within the category of seriously affecting a child's health, welfare or development, you must submit all concerns about sexual abuse as a mandated person to Tusla.

There is one exception, which deals with underage consensual sexual activity between teenagers who are between 15 and 17 years of age [See Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Guidance of Children, P23]. This is unlikely to apply to Primary Schools.

Appendix 7: Circumstances which give rise to Concern

Children living in certain circumstances may be particularly vulnerable to harm. Children living in the following situations may be at increased risk of harm. However, it is important to note that the presence of any of these circumstances does not mean that the child is being abused:

A. Parent/Guardian/Carer Factors

- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Addiction, including gambling
- Mental health issues
- Conflictual relationships
- Domestic violence
- Adolescent parents
- Parental disability issues, including learning or intellectual disability

B. Child Factors

- Age
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Previous abuse
- Disability
- Communication difficulties
- Trafficked/Exploited
- Young carer
- Mental health issues, including self-harm and suicide

C. Community Factors

- Cultural, ethnic, religious or faith-based norms in the family or community which may not meet the standards of child welfare or protection required in this
- Jurisdiction Culture-specific practices, including:
 - Female genital mutilation
 - Forced marriage
 - Honour-based violence
 - Radicalisation

D. Environmental Factors

- Housing Issues
- Poverty/Begging
- Bullying
- Communication difficulties

- Children who are out of home and not living with their parents, whether temporarily or permanently
- Internet and social media-related concerns

E. Poor Motivation or Willingness of Parents / Guardians to engage

- Non-attendance at appointments
- Lack of insight or understanding of how the child is being affected
- Lack of understanding about what needs to happen to bring about change
- Avoidance of contact and reluctance to work with services
- Inability or unwillingness to comply with agreed plans

These factors should be considered routinely as part of the process of being alert to the possibility that a child may be at risk.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression – verbal, psychological or physical and can be conducted by an individual or group against one or more persons. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. It can often be based on perceived differences e.g. gender identity, sexual preference, race, ethnicity religion, parent's occupation etc. ICTs mean that bullying can be perpetrated through mobile phones or other personal devices using internet and social media enablers such as Facebook, Snapchat etc.

Some children are particularly vulnerable to bullying. These include:

- SEN children
- Minority ethnic groups
- Traveller children
- LGBT children
- Minority religious faiths
- Academic high achievers
- Children with underdeveloped social skills and social cue recognition

The management of bullying among children in a school environment is an ongoing task and requires constant vigilance among school staff as well as constantly revised and understood policies.

All of the above factors and bullying need to be taken into account as part of the process of being vigilant for the presence of child abuse and suffering among the children in every school.

Appendix 8: When a Child Makes a Disclosure

When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that your actions do not jeopardise legal action against the abuser.

If as a mandated person, you receive a disclosure of harm from a child, which is above the thresholds, you must consult with the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and make a mandated report of the concern to Tusla. You are not required to judge the truth of the claims or the credibility of the child. If the concern does not meet the threshold to be reported as a mandated concern, you should report it to Tusla as a reasonable concern.

There are a number of basic 'rules' that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosures of abuse from a child:

- Don't panic
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person
- Listen to the child and accept what the child says
- Look at the child directly, but do not appear shocked
- Don't seek help while the child is talking to you
- Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone
- Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened
- Write down what the child says in their own words – record what you have seen and heard also
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is paramount in this stage of the procedure
- Tell your DLP or DDLP as possible
- As a mandated person, you must make a report to Tusla, or the Gardaí immediately. This can be done in conjunction with the DLP/DDLP
- After making the referral look after yourself. Discuss the matter with your DLP/DDLP or relevant person

Important Notes

- The same action should be taken if the allegation is about abuse that has taken place in the past, as it will be important to find out if the person is still working with or has access to children
- Dealing with an allegation that a colleague on the school staff has abused a child is difficult but must be taken seriously and dealt with carefully and fairly

Things to say when a child discloses

- 'I believe you'
- 'I am going to try to help you'
- 'I will help you'
- 'I am glad that you told me'
- 'You are not to blame'

Things not to say when a child discloses

- 'You should have told someone before'
- 'I can't believe it! I am shocked!'
- 'Oh that explains a lot'
- 'No not...he's a friend of mine'
- 'I won't tell anyone else'
- 'Why? How? When? Where? Who?'

Things to do

- Reassure the child that s/he was right to tell you
- Let them know what you are going to do next
- Immediately seek help, in the first place from the DLP/DDLP
- Write down accurately what the child has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support

Things not to do

- Do not attempt to deal with the situation yourself
- Do not formally interview the child:
 - Never ask leading questions
 - Never push for information or make assumptions
 - Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained, when clarification is needed
 - Do not make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents
 - Do not keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality
 - Do not take any action that might undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents or carers
 - Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the designated child protection officer

Appendix 9: Role of Designated Liaison Person

Under the new DES Child Protection Procedures 2017, the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) remains the first point of contact for all allegations or suspicions of child abuse in the school. The requirements of the DLP are:-

1. To act as a resource person to any member of the School Staff who may have Child Protection concerns. While the DLP will be familiar with the area of Child Protection, s/he may consult with Tusla if unsure of whether or not to make a report on a particular concern. During this consultation, no details are given which might identify the parties involved.
2. To ensure that the proper reporting procedures are followed in the school so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.
3. To record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to his or her attention, and the actions taken in relation to a concern or allegation of child abuse.
4. To make a report at each BoM meeting in relation to Child Protection issues in the school. In the case where the DLP is not the Principal, the non-Principal DLP will ensure that the Principal has all the data required to make the report to the BoM. This report is referred to as the Oversight Report.

Where a DLP decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:-

1. The reasons for not reporting should be recorded
2. Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded
3. The Mandated Person or non-Mandated Person who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla
4. The Mandated Person or non-Mandated Person should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána

Appendix 10: Record Keeping

The section references below relate to '*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*' and summarise the main record-keeping requirements set out in those procedures as follows:

Section 3.4 sets out requirements on individual members of the school staff to record child protection concerns that they may have, including disclosures from children and any actions taken in respect of same.

Section 5.1.1 requires that the DLP shall make a written record of any concern brought to his or her attention by a member of the school staff and will place this record in a secure location.

Section 5.3.3 requires that in all cases where the DLP has sought the advice of Tusla, the DLP will retain a record of the consultation which will note the date, the name of the Tusla official and the advice given.

Section 3.4.4 requires that the DLP shall retain a copy of every report submitted by him or her to Tusla and shall keep a record of any further actions taken by the DLP and of any further communications with Tusla, An Garda Síochána or other parties in relation to that report.

Section 3.4.5 requires that all records created shall be regarded as highly confidential and placed in a secure location.

Section 3.4.6 requires that to allow for the effective recording and tracking of relevant records and actions, child protection case files and any parties referenced in such files shall be assigned a unique code or serial number by the DLP. In this context 'parties' means any party whose identity, if disclosed, might lead to the identification of a child or a person against whom an allegation has been made.

Section 9.4 requires that a Child Protection Oversight Report must be provided to the Board of Management (BoM), as part of the principal's report to the board, at every BoM meeting. The information that will be provided in this report is set out at sections 9.5 to 9.8 of these procedures.

Sections 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7 provide that the minutes of BoM meetings will record child protection matters by reference to the unique code or serial number assigned to the case/parties concerned.

Section 5.3.6 requires that where the DLP informs a parent/carer that a report concerning his or her child is being made, a record will be made of the information communicated by the DLP to the parent/carer. It also requires that a decision by the DLP not to inform a parent/carer shall be recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.

Section 5.3.8 requires that if the DLP decides that the concern of the member of school personnel, including that of a mandated person should not be reported to Tusla, the DLP shall give the member of the school staff a clear statement, in writing, as to the reasons why action is not being taken. A copy of this statement shall be retained by the DLP.

Where that member of the school staff decides to make a report to Tusla, he or she must provide the DLP with a copy of that report.

Section 5.6 requires that where the DLP issues a notification to a parent in accordance with that section, a copy of that notification shall be retained by the DLP.

Section 3.5.4 requires the BoM to ensure that arrangements are in place to ensure that the DDLP can access relevant records when required.

Section 8.1 3.6 requires that records of the annual review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and its outcome shall be retained and made available, if requested, to the patron and/or the Department.

The above is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the record keeping requirements in these procedures and school personnel should ensure that records are maintained in line with the requirements set out in these procedures.

Appendix 11: Procedures for Dealing with Child Protection Concerns

Below is a summary of the actions to be taken by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in relation to Child Protection Concerns brought to him/her. These give an outline and it is important to take time to consult the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) for details before proceeding. Chapter 5 contains the details of Reporting Concerns.

Allegations of abuse made against school staff may require immediate action involving suspension of the teacher, SNA or member of ancillary staff. The Board of Management (BoM) should always seek comprehensive legal advice before embarking on such action.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS	
<p align="center">When a Registered Teacher has a Child Protection Concern (Procedures 5.1.1 / 5.1.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Teacher will immediately report a child protection concern to the DLP. The Teacher will work with the DLP on the reporting procedures • A registered teacher is a mandated person and has a statutory obligation to make a mandated report to Tusla. This will normally be done by making a joint mandated report with the DLP. 	
<p align="center">When someone else in the School Community has a Child Protection Concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNA/Ancillary Staff – Report Concern to DLP (Procedures 5.1.1 / 5.1.2) • Parent/Guardian - Report Concern to DLP (Procedures 5.6) 	
<p align="center">Actions of DLP on becoming aware of a Concern (Procedures 5.1.1 / 5.1.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open a Secure File – use a code number for child's file • Record all details of the Concern • Consult Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023), Children First National Guidelines 2017, relevant circulars and Tusla documentation. • Commence Reporting Procedure 	
<p align="center">Reporting Procedures (Procedures 5.3 / 5.4)</p>	

Are there Reasonable Grounds for Concern? Have the Thresholds for Harm been reached?

- If yes – Make a mandated report to TUSLA
- If unsure – Consult with TUSLA and follow advice given. Be clear that you are consulting only and do not give details of persons involved
- If in any doubt – make a mandated report
- If thresholds not reached, but you have concerns – make a report

If TUSLA are not available and the case warrants immediate response, report to Gardaí.

Records of Reporting

- Record the details of the concern in the file
- Keep records of all reports made to TUSLA or Gardaí
- Record details of advice sought:
 - The person you spoke to
 - The advice given

**When the DLP decides not to make a Report to TUSLA
(Procedures 5.3.8)**

- Inform the reporting person in writing of the decision not to make a report
- Inform the reporting person that they may make a report to TUSLA and give the school a copy
- Keep copies of the above in the file
- Keep a copy of any report by the reporting person in the file
- Include all details in your next oversight report to the BoM

**Informing Parents
(Children First Chapter 3 p.25)**

A school is not required to inform the family that a report is being made to Tusla. It is good practice however to tell the family that a report is being made and the reasons for the decision.

It is not necessary to inform the family if by doing so:

- the child will be placed at further risk
- might impair Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment
- you believe that you are putting yourself at risk of harm from the family

The DLP may seek advice from TUSLA regarding informing the family and record all communication with the family or TUSLA in the File
<p style="text-align: center;">Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) (Procedures 5.5)</p> <p>The Principal (normally DLP) will make a CPOR at every BoM meeting. It will detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any allegations of abuse raised in relation to school staff since the last BoM meeting • Other child protection concerns raised in relation to any child since the last BoM meeting • Child protection concerns regarding alleged bullying behaviour since the last BoM meeting • Any other relevant information
<p style="text-align: center;">TUSLA Reporting Forms</p> <p>TUSLA reporting is now online and is done via the Tusla Portal using secure login details. A copy of the report is kept on the child's Child protection file.</p>

**Appendix 12: Child Protection Oversight Report to Board of Management
Template**

<u>Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) By DLP to BoM</u>
Date of BoM meeting:
Any allegations of abuse raised in relation to school staff since the last BoM meeting:
Other child protection concerns raised in relation to any child since the last BoM meeting:
Child protection concerns regarding alleged bullying behaviour since the last BoM meeting:
Any other relevant information:

**Appendix 13: Tusla Child Protection and Welfare Report Form- see Tusla Portal
online at www.tusla.ie**