

**CHILD
PROTECTION
POLICY**

OF

BEHYMORE N.S.

November 2013

Introductory Statement

This policy has been updated to reflect recent changes in legislation and takes account of the provisions of each of the following pieces of legislation:

- Freedom of Information Act 1997
- The Education Act 1998
- The Child Welfare Act 2000
- Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of Behy National School has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of this overall child protection policy.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Patrick Cunnane.
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Paula Cummins.
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Behy National School will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;

- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

5. Relevant school policies will take particular account of this Child Protection Policy.

These policies include SPHE plan our Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

In addition, a number of measures and roles are outlined below to ensure the protection of the children in our care. We have detailed these under the following three headings:

- a) Prevention – curriculum provision**
- b) Procedures - procedures for dealing with concerns / disclosures**
- c) Practice - best practice in child protection**

A. Prevention

Curriculum implications:

- By always taking into account the safety of the child, we will strive to ensure that the school is an emotionally and physically safe place.
- We will educate our children in the protective skills of self esteem and assertiveness through the use of the SPHE, RSE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe and Circle Time programmes.
- Our whole school plan in SPHE supports child protection in that it develops awareness of issues relating to child protection.
- In the SPHE Curriculum the unit Safety & Protection is dealt with every 2nd year. As part of this unit Personal Safety is addressed. This content is designed to enable

pupils to protect themselves in situations which they may find dangerous or threatening. We teach this content, using suitable programmes.

- The Stay Safe programme is taught as part of the schools' SPHE curriculum under the Strand Unit 'Safety and Protection' (Personal Safety.) On enrolment of their child parents will be informed that the Stay Safe Programme is in use in the school. The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every second year in accordance with the SPHE two-year cycle plan.
- The other curriculum areas which have implications for child protection are Religion and PE.

B. Procedures

Appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- The appointment of the DLP and Deputy DLP will take place after the first Board of Management meeting in the school year.
- The positions of DLP and deputy DLP will be reviewed every two years.
- In dealing with issues relating to child protection, the DLP, Deputy DLP and school staff will implement the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the Board Of Management (BOM)

1. The B.O.M has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their pupils. For roles and responsibilities of BOM refer to p16/17 of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures (DES) and p50/51 of Children First Guidelines.
- 2.

- Provide training and education for BOM members- Boards of Management received training on Child Protection procedures 2009 by the CPMSA
- Staff to be trained – BOM provide funding and time- Staff have attended information seminars on Child Protection hosted by the PPDS
- Appoint DLP and Deputy DLP
- Follow procedures from guidelines
- Identify children at risk; family history, attendance records
- Ensure SPHE, Stay Safe and Walk Tall are being implemented in the school
- Ensure safe practices in the school around appointing personnel and around day-to-day practices in the school
- Follow procedures for dealing with allegations of Child Abuse by a school employee
- Arrange cover for teacher to attend Case Conference Meetings
- The Chairperson of the Board is informed where there is a referral to the HSE

Role of the Staff Member (to include Teachers, SNAs, Caretaker, Secretary etc.)

All staff members have a general duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect children from harm.

It is the responsibility of all teachers and staff members to familiarise themselves with the *Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (1999) especially:

- **Chapter 3** Definition & Recognition of Child Abuse
- **Chapter 4** Basis for Reporting & Standard Reporting Procedures
- **Appendix 1** Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

- **Pg 9 DES Guidelines** How to handle a disclosure.

What are the guidelines for teachers and staff members in handling?

1. Disclosures from children p9 (2.4) (DES)
2. Suspicions of Abuse p12 & 13, Summary of Guidelines, Health Board

- ♣ Consider
- ♣ Observe
- ♣ Record
- ♣ Teachers shall keep confidential records on ongoing concerns or observations. No child will be identified by name in these records.
- ♣ With regard to matters of a confidential nature, the school cannot take any responsibility for what is discussed in the yard or classroom. The school cannot guarantee confidentiality if a child discloses personal information to other children.

Role of Designated Liaison Person

Action to be taken by Designated Liaison Person

See pages 11 & 12 Child Protection Guidelines (DES)

Child Protection Meetings

See page 13 & 14 Protection Guidelines (DES)

Record Keeping: The Principal teacher and secretary are responsible for safe-keeping, storage and confidentiality of all files in their possession e.g. roll books, registers, absence notes, reports etc. All records are kept accurately, factual and up to date, including our child protection files. We are aware that referrals made to the HSE can be accessed under the Freedom of Information Act.

Induction of teachers and ancillary staff: Copy of child protection policy to be made available. A folder detailing school rules, policy etc. is also provided.

Attendance:

- This will be reviewed at regular intervals, noting trends in partial attendance and non attendance.
- Notes explaining absences are mandatory and such notes are kept on file.
- Trends of non attendance will be reviewed taking particular care in the light of child protection issues.

Special Needs:

- When practical, resource teachers, learning support teachers and other staff members will not be alone with one child.
- Where necessary SPHE curriculum will be adapted for pupils with special needs.
- Information will be provided to all ancillary staff. The same will apply to visiting personnel.

C. Practice

We examined the Stay Safe booklet for schools – “Best Practice in Child Protection – Guidance for Schools” when looking at our own practice around Child Protection.

(i) Recruitment and selection of staff.

When recruiting staff, we are mindful of checking references and cvs. Where possible, we do background checks on students coming on teaching practice or voluntary placements.

We are aware that all probated Newly Qualified Teachers are vetted through the teaching council and all other teachers will be vetted retrospectively. We are aware that outside coaches from the FAI, IRFU and GAA (NGBs) have their own Code of Ethics as laid down by the Irish Sports Council. – cf Code of Conduct for Children’s Sport in our school. We will follow vetting procedures with visiting teachers where necessary and ancillary school staff. Vetting forms are available in the Diocesan office and are sent to the Central Vetting Unit in Thurles for the vetting process.

(ii) General Conduct

While physical contact can be used to comfort, reassure and assist a child the following should be factors 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.

(iii) Toileting accidents.

We believe it is important not to leave a child in a distressed situation and left unattended following a toileting accident. We have put in place procedures which staff members are comfortable with. We keep a note of such incidents and parents are notified. We provide a change of clothes and encourage, where possible, independent dressing. All such incidents are dealt with in a discrete manner.

(iv) Changing for Games/PE and swimming.

All pupils, from first to Sixth, have the opportunity to go swimming every year.

We strike a balance between the child's right to privacy and adequate supervision with due regard to gender issues. At certain times, parents assist in the dressing room while encouraging and fostering independent dressing. The BOM and parents are aware and in agreement of supervision arrangements.

When pupils are involved with changing at games, athletics or outdoor pursuits, we are mindful of our duty of care while supervising, while affording the pupils a level of privacy.

(v) Supervision.

The school yard is divided up into two areas, appropriate to the age and activities for the different class levels. Each area is supervised by a teacher and classroom assistant. There are two teachers on duty at all breaks. They are assisted by our SNAs.

We are aware that certain areas e.g. woods and slope are less visible. Constant monitoring of these areas is necessary.

Visitors entering the yard during breaks are directed to staff room or Principal's room or office.

With regard to first aid and administration of medicine, we have a health and safety policy and we have procedures, as agreed with parents, staff and BOM on administering medicines.

Where schools are aware of a court order being in place which prevents someone from having access to a child, a copy of that order should be requested by the school. Teachers are mindful of their supervision responsibilities at all school related activities. It is recommended that pupils never travel in staff cars.

(vi) One to One teaching

One to One teaching may be provided if deemed appropriate. This will depend on the learning needs of the pupil and the behavioural supports required for the pupils. Where there is one to one teaching, we inform the parents of the teaching programmes and organizational aspects of the support.

(vii) Visitors/ Guest speakers

The class teacher will always be present with visiting personnel. We ensure that the material and content being used is appropriate and relevant to the school curriculum.

(viii) Internet and technology safety.

Pupils are not allowed to bring in mobile phones or handheld game devices into school. We consult www.webwise.ie for advice on technology and website safety. Webwise lessons are taught as part of the Stay Safe Programme.
Cf internet policy.

Links with other plans and policies

- SPHE plan
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti Bullying policy.
- Health and Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

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

7. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.