

Our Lady of Fatima



Child Protection Policy

Mission Statement

Our Lady of Fatima School seeks to provide a happy and secure learning environment for all our students where they can be confident that if they have concerns they will be listened to with understanding and respect and they will be acted on.

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 Our Lady of Fatima School has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. The Board of Management of Our Lady of Fatima School has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the DES Child Protection Procedures as part of this policy. This policy is an outline of how Our Lady of Fatima School proposes to implement these procedures in order to ensure the protection and welfare of all students attending our school.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Rita Waters
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (Deputy DLP) are Bridget Leacy & Mary Hore.
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Our Lady of Fatima 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.

Guidelines for school personnel

- 1.0 Appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (DLP)
- 2.0 Roles, Responsibilities and Guidelines.
 - 2.1 Role of the Board of Management.
 - 2.2 Role of the Staff Members (Teachers, SNAs, Caretakers, Secretary)
 - 2.3 Role of the Designated Liaison Person.
- 3.0 Child Protection meetings / care conferences.
- 4.0 Organisational implications.
- 5.0 Curriculum implications.

1.0 Appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- The Board of Management has appointed Rita Waters as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in Our Lady of Fatima School to have specific responsibility for child protection.
- Bridget Leacy and Mary Hore have been appointed as Deputy DLP to take the place of the DLP if she is unavailable for whatever reason.
- The position of DLP will be addressed at the first meeting of each new Board of Management. The DLP will continue to act as such until such time as she is replaced by the Board of Management for whatever reason.

2.0 Roles of Responsibilities

- The Board of Management has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their pupils.
- The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection in the school.
- All staff have a general duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect students from harm.

2.1 Role of the Board of Management

- To arrange for the planning, development and implementation of an effective child protection programme.
- To monitor and evaluate its effectiveness.
- To provide appropriate staff development and training.

Specifically they will

- Appoint a DLP and deputy DLP.
- Have clear procedures for dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse (see below).
- Monitor the progress of students at risk.
- Ensure that curricular provision is in place for the prevention of child abuse.
- Investigate and respond to allegations of child abuse against one of the school's employees which have been reported to the Health Service Executive (HSE) or Gardai.
- To decide on teachers' attendance at child protection meetings / case conferences and to advise teachers before attending such meetings / conferences.

Procedures for BOM in cases of allegation or suspicions of child abuse by a school employee:

A. Reporting

In the event of receiving a complaint or suspicion regarding an employee:

- The DLP will immediately inform the chairperson.
- She will seek a written statement of the allegation from the person/agency making the allegation. Parents/Guardians may make a statement of behalf of a student.
- The DLP will seek advice from the relevant HSE and will take responsibility for reporting, based on this advice.
- If the DLP, following consultation with the HSE, decides that this matter is not for reporting, she must inform the Chairperson. They must then inform, in writing, the person or agency making the allegation, of the reasons for this decision. If the person or agency still has concerns, they are free to consult with or report to the relevant HSE or Gardaí on an individual basis. The provisions of the Protection for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 apply, once they report reasonably and in good faith.
- If the DLP, following consultation with the HSE, decides that this matter is for reporting she should inform the Chairperson, who should proceed in accordance with the procedures in the Child Protection Procedures.
- The DLP/Deputy DLP completes a standard reporting form as comprehensively as is possible.
- When the Chairperson becomes aware of an allegation of abuse s/he will always seek legal advice and base her response on this advice.
- S/he will privately inform the employee of the fact and nature of the allegation and whether or not it has been reported by the DLP to the HSE. The Chairperson has a duty to afford the employee fairness and due process – s/he is entitled to details and a copy of the written allegation, to advice and representation and an opportunity to respond to the Board within a week.

B. Responding

- When the Chairperson becomes aware of an allegation of abuse s/he will always seek legal advice and base his/her response on this advice.
- The Chairperson will consider whether there is any risk of pupils. If the Chairperson considers that there is a risk – s/he may require the employee to take immediate administrative leave. If unsure the Chairperson will consult with the HSE/Gardaí.
- If administrative leave has been invoked, the Chairperson will inform the DES. The HSE or Gardaí may also be notified in accordance with legal advice received.
- Once it is deemed necessary by the DLP and Chairperson to make a report (after receiving advice from the HSE) the Chairperson will convene and inform a meeting of the BOM as soon as possible.
- Where the alleged abuse has taken place within the school, or relates to the abuse of pupils of the school, by school employees outside of school time, the BOM will investigate the matter. They will convene a further meeting, once the relevant information has been gathered. At this meeting the BOM will consider in detail.
 - The allegations made and their source
 - The advice given by relevant authorities
 - The written responses of the employee

- At this meeting also
 - The person/agency who is alleging abuse by the school employee should be offered an opportunity to present his/her case to the BOM and may be accompanied by another person.
 - Parents/Guardians may act on behalf of student.
 - The employee should also be afforded an opportunity to present his/her case and may also be accompanied.
- The BOM must deal with the matter sensitively and the employee must be fairly treated.
- The BOM will make a decision on action, if any, based on their investigation and will inform the employee of this in writing. They will also inform the DES of the outcome, if the employee has been absent on administrative leave.
- Where it is not possible for the BOM to conduct an enquiry into allegations (e.g. where abuse has occurred in past employment, or where the employee is undergoing investigation by relevant authorities), the Chairperson will act on advice of authorities. The Chairperson will maintain close contact with the HSE and receive reports and records from them where appropriate.

2.2 Role of the Staff Members (Teachers, SNAs, Caretaker, Secretary....)

- Staff are provided with copies of the following Procedures and it is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise themselves with the Procedures.
 - Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools.
 - Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

Guidelines for teachers and staff members in handling

Disclosures from students

Where a child discloses alleged abuse to a staff member, the person receiving that information should listen carefully and supportively. Great care must be taken not to abuse the students trust. This should not be a formal interview.

The following advice is offered:

- Listen to the student
- Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the student.
- Do not stop a student recalling significant events.
- Do not over-react.
- Confidentiality should not be assured – explain that further help may have to be sought.
- Record the discussion accurately noting
 - What, where and when?
 - Descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries.
 - Explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate.
- Retain the record securely.
- The staff member should obtain only necessary relevant facts. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to investigate allegations of abuse.
- The DLP should then be informed and given relevant records.
- If the suspected abuser is the DLP then the suspicion and any records will be passed on to the Chairperson who will proceed as per guidelines.

Suspicious of Abuse

- Staff members who suspect abuse should refer to Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.
- Staff members should observe and record over time and dates, signs, symptoms, behaviour causing them concern.
- They should inform the DLP and pass on all records.

2.3 Role of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- The DLP acts as a liaison with outside agencies, HSE, Gardaí and other parties with child protection concerns.
- The DLP will inform all school personnel of the availability of the Child Protection Procedures, and Children First Guidelines in the school.
- The DLP will be available to staff for consultation regarding suspicions or disclosures of abuse. She will keep records of these consultations.
- The DLP will seek advice from the HSE.
- The DLP will report suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the HSE or/and An Gardaí Síochána based on this advice.
- The DLP will maintain proper records in a secure, confidential manner and in a secure location.
- The DLP will keep up to date on current developments regarding child protection.

Guidelines for the DLP in handling reported concerns and disclosures

- Where the DLP/Deputy DLP have concerns about a child, but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, they should seek appropriate advice. To do this the DLP/Deputy should make informal contact with the assigned (on duty) Social Worker. The DLP/Deputy in this case, should be explicit that she is requesting advice and not making a report. If advised to report the matter, the DLP will act on that advice.
- A report will then be made to the HSE by the DLP/Deputy in person, by telephone or in writing. In the event of an emergency or non-availability of HSE staff, the report should be made to the Gardaí. The DLP should also report the matter to the Chairperson of the BOM, who should then follow the procedures as outlined in Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011.
- A standard reporting form is completed by the DLP/Deputy as comprehensively as possible (See Appendix 1)
- Parents/Guardians will normally be informed that a report is being made. It may be decided that informing the parent/carer is likely to endanger the student or place the student at further risk. The decision not to inform the parent/carer should be briefly recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.
- When the allegation is against the DLP, the chairperson then assumes responsibility for reporting the matter to the HSE and filing in the standard reporting form.
- Where there are allegations or suspicions of Peer Abuse the DLP will follow the same procedures.
 - Parents of all parties will be notified and the DLP will inform the Chairperson.
 - Principal and class teachers will make arrangements to meet separately with all parents, to resolve the matter.
 - The school will make arrangements to minimise the possibility of the abusive behaviour recurring.

3.0 Child Protection Meetings/Case Conference

- A request is made from the HSE through the DLP who should consult with the Chairperson of the BOM of the school. The Chairperson may seek clarification through the DLP as to why the attendance of the school employee is necessary and ascertain who else will be present.
- The school employee may complete a report for the meeting/conference.
- The school employee will be advised if students/parents/guardians are going to be present. The school employee may contact the Chairperson of the Child Protection Meeting for advice.
- The school employee may keep a child's behaviour under closer observation, if requested to do so. This may include observing the child's behaviour, peer interactions, school progress or informal conversations.
- In all cases, individuals who refer or discuss their concerns about the care and protection of children with HSE staff, should be informed of the likely steps to be taken by the professionals involved. Where appropriate and within the normal limits of confidentiality, reporting staff will be kept informed about the outcomes of any enquiry or investigation following on from their report.
- Teachers attending a child protection meeting/case conference should familiarise themselves with protocol

4.0 Organisational Implications

School procedures already in place and new procedures being put in place will be examined with reference to the Children First Guidelines and any Child Protection issues that may arise will be addressed.

The following policies have been addressed in this review:

- Accidents
- Anti Bullying
- Attendance
- Children travelling in staff cars
- Code of Discipline
- Communication
- Induction of staff
- Induction of pupils
- Record Keeping
- Sporting Activities
- Supervision
- Swimming
- Tours
- Work Experience
- Visibility
- Visitors

Accidents

While every precaution will be taken under our Health and Safety Statement to ensure the safety of students, we realise that accidents will happen. Accidents will be noted in our Incident book and will be addressed under our accident policy as part of Health and Safety.

Anti 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.

Attendance

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

Children travelling in staff cars

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

Code of Discipline

Students are encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Discipline. 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.

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 programme 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.

Induction of Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, DES, 2001 and Children First Guidelines, 1999. The DLP will give a copy of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, Chapters 3 & 4 and Appendix 1 of Children First and this Child Protection Policy to all new staff. All new teachers are expected to teach the designated SPHE objectives for their class. Alice Ryan is responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives. Alice Ryan is also responsible for ensuring that new teachers know how to fill in the roll book correctly and informing the teacher of record keeping procedures within the school.

Induction of Pupils

All parents and students 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. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress. All parents are given a copy

of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. Access to all school policies e.g. Enrolment, Code of Discipline and Anti Bullying Policies.

Record Keeping

Teachers will keep each student's file updated with results of assessments carried out, dates and details of meetings with parents and notes from parents. The records are kept in the Principal's office locked at all times. Roll books will be updated daily. Sensitive information regarding students will be shared on a need-to-know basis. All education files of pupils who no longer attend this school are kept in the filing cabinet in the principal's office indefinitely. Further details on record keeping are found in the school's Record Keeping Policy.

Sporting Activities

Students will be closely supervised during all sporting activities. Where contact is a necessary part of the lesson it will be rigorously monitored to ensure that all contact is appropriate.

Supervision

The school's supervision policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks and before and after school. Principal/Deputy Principal will be involved before/after school supervision. A rota is displayed to cover break and lunchtime breaks. See supervision policy for agreed rules around break-times, procedures around teacher absences.

Swimming

Students will be brought by bus to the swimming pool. They will be supervised in the changing rooms in order to ensure their safety. All adults will act in 'loco parentis' and as such will act as prudent parents in helping students to return to school as dry as possible.

Tours

During any outing, whether a short walk, or a day away, students will be given clear instructions on appropriate behaviour, both from themselves and from others. Staff will ensure that everyone is kept safe and closely monitored and that each student is collected by an appropriate adult in a designated place.

Work Experience

All personnel coming to Our Lady of Fatima School on placement will produce proof of having being Garda vetted, and will sign additional documentation to this effect. (See Appendix 3)

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that students are visible in the school play ground. Students will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or elsewhere where they would not be under

adult supervision. They are not to leave the school play ground or to engage with adults who are outside of the school play ground.

Visitors

Teachers on play ground duty will be aware of visitors entering the school play ground and will ascertain their intentions.

5.0 Curriculum Implications

Introduction

In Our Lady of Fatima School all students will be cherished and in fulfilling the general aims of the Primary Curriculum we will

- Enable the student to live a full life as a student and to realise his or her potential.
- Enable the student to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society.
- Prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

In endeavouring to realise these aims we will create a positive school climate which is open, inclusive, respectful, fair, democratic and tolerant and which seeks to support the holistic development of all children and all adults working with our children. The strategies we will use to create this environment are detailed in our SPHE Plan and will involve:

- Creating a health-promoting physical environment
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Fostering respect for diversity
- Building effective communication within the school
- Developing appropriate home-school communication
- Catering for individual needs
- Developing democratic process
- Fostering inclusive and respectful language.

We strive to ensure that our school will be physically and emotionally safe and we will deliver the curricular content of our SPHE programme with a view to giving our students the protective skills of self-esteem and assertiveness. The circle time methodologies will be used on a whole school basis. The No-Blame approach will be adopted in our Anti-Bullying policy. Co-operative interpersonal skills will be developed through working in pairs and working in groups. Older children will be encouraged to work positively and skills in negotiation, building consensus and managing conflict will be developed.

The SPHE programme will be supported by the use of the Walk Tall materials, RSE resources, Stay Safe resources and North-Western Health board resources.

Success Criteria

We will evaluate the success of this policy using the following criteria:

- Delivery and participation by all staff in training
- Delivery of the SPHE curriculum
- Resources to support the delivery of SPHE
- Delivery and participation by students in the Stay Safe Programme
- Assessment of these procedures by participants following a child protection case

- Feedback from all staff

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.

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

Originally Ratified by the Board of Management on 12th March 2012.

Reviewed on 23rd September, 2014

Reviewed on the 22nd September, 2015

Ratified by the BOM on: 27th September, 2016

Signed: 
Chairperson BOM

Appendix 1

FORM NUMBER: CC01:01:00

STANDARD REPORT FORM

(For reporting CP&W concerns to HSE)



Health Service Executive
Child Protection Unit

A. To Principal Social Worker/Designate:

1. Date of Report

2. Details of Child

Name:

Address:

Alias

DOB

School

Correspondence
address (if different)

Male

Female

Age

3. Details of Persons Reporting Concern(s)

Name:

Address:

Telephone No.

Occupation

Relationship to client

Reporter wishes to remain anonymous

Reporter discussed with parents/guardians

4. Parents Aware of Report

Are the child's parents/carers aware that this concern is being reported to the HSE?

Yes

No

5. Details of Report

(Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known.)

STANDARD REPORT FORM

(For reporting CP&W Concerns to HSE)



Health and Safety Commission
Health Research Institute

6. RELATIONSHIPS

Details of Mother

Name:
Address:
(if different to child)

Details of Father

Name:
Address:
(if different to child)

Telephone Nos:

Telephone Nos.

7. Household composition

Name	Relationship	DOB	Additional information, e.g. School/Occupation/Other
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8. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

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

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

Relationship to child: Age Male Female
 Name: Occupation
 Address:

10. Details of person completing form

Name: Occupation
 Signed Date:

Appendix 2: Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of its child protection policy and the following checklist shall be used for this purpose.

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

As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess other school policies, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the school's child protection policy.

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	
As part of the school's child protection policy, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	
Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	
Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	
Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	
Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	
Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	
Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?	
Has the Board ensured that the Department's "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools" are available to all school personnel?	
Has the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school's child protection policy to new school personnel?	
Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	
Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made to the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP?	
Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made?	
Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/ An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed?	
Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	
Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	
Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	

	Yes/No
Has the Board ensured that the school's child protection policy is available to parents on request?	
Has the Board ensured that the Stay Safe programme is implemented in full in the school? (applies to primary schools)	
Has the Board ensured that the SPHE curriculum is implemented in full in the school?	
Is the Board satisfied that the Department's requirements for Garda Vetting have been met in respect of all school personnel (employees and volunteers)? *	
Is the Board satisfied that the Department's requirements in relation to the provision of a child protection related statutory declaration and associated form of undertaking have been met in respect of persons appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions?*	
Is the Board satisfied that, from a child protection perspective, thorough recruitment and selection procedures are applied by the school in relation to all school personnel (employees and volunteers)?*	
Is the Board satisfied that the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' are being fully and adequately implemented by the school?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's child protection policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the school's child protection policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement ?	
Has the Board ensured that any areas for improvement that that were identified in any previous review of the school's child protection policy have been adequately addressed?	

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

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's child protection policy was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 2 of the Department's 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Appendix 3

Form to be completed by Volunteers

In addition to filling in this form it will also be necessary to undergo the vetting process if your services are required by the school.

This school owes a duty of care to its pupils. The school has a duty to satisfy itself that no person assisting in the school in any capacity poses a threat to pupils or staff. The school must therefore make certain enquiries of all volunteers assisting in any capacity in the school.

The following 5 questions **must be responded to**:

1. Where have you been residing during the previous five years?

2. Were you ever the subject of an inquiry by a Health Board concerning a child welfare matter?

YES NO

3. Were you ever the subject of a Garda criminal investigation arising from a complaint of child abuse?

YES NO

4. Were you the subject of any allegation of criminal conduct or wrongdoing towards a minor?

YES NO

5. Are you aware of any material circumstance in respect of your own conduct which touched/touches on the welfare of a minor?

YES NO

The school undertakes that all responses furnished by you in respect of the above questions, will be treated as confidential, subject to any reporting obligations which may be imposed on the school, pursuant to "Children First" published by the Department of Health, or pursuant to any legal obligation imposed on the school to facilitate the effective investigation of crime.

In the event that the school finds it necessary to make third party enquires from a Health Board and/or the Gardaí, to confirm the accuracy of your replies to the above questions, you agree to consent to the school's making of such enquires and your responding to same.

You should note that if the school becomes aware of the fact that you have made incomplete or inaccurate disclosure your assistance will be dispensed with immediately.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4

**Our Lady of Fatima Special School,
Carrigeen Street,
Wexford.**

Tel: 053 9123376
Fax: 053 9147648
Email: ladyoffatimaschool@eircom.net
Website: www.ladyoffatimaschool.ie



Principal: Rita Waters

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: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2011) notes 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 *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2011) in relation to child protection and welfare. These procedures promote the safety and welfare of all children and are to be welcomed.

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Fatima School has adopted these procedures as school policy. Consequently, if school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child abuse (neglect, emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse) they are obliged to refer this matter to Children and Family Service of the HSE. The HSE will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned. In our school the Designated Liaison Persons for dealing with Child Protection are Rita Waters, Bridget Leacy and Mary Hore.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children may be accessed on the website of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (www.dcyu.ie) and the Department of Education and Skills *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* can be read on the Department's website (www.education.ie). Parents/Guardians are also welcome to look through the procedures and Child Protection Policy here at the school.

Yours sincerely,

M. Rita Waters

Rita Waters,
Principal.

Appendix 5

Child Protection: Procedures and Practice

Could be adopted by all classes to record facts - do not use child's name (Roll No?). Can be used in conjunction with next page.

Sample Record		
Code		
Date	Observation	Signed

Don't make copies. Use page 5 to help record keeping DLP keeps original.

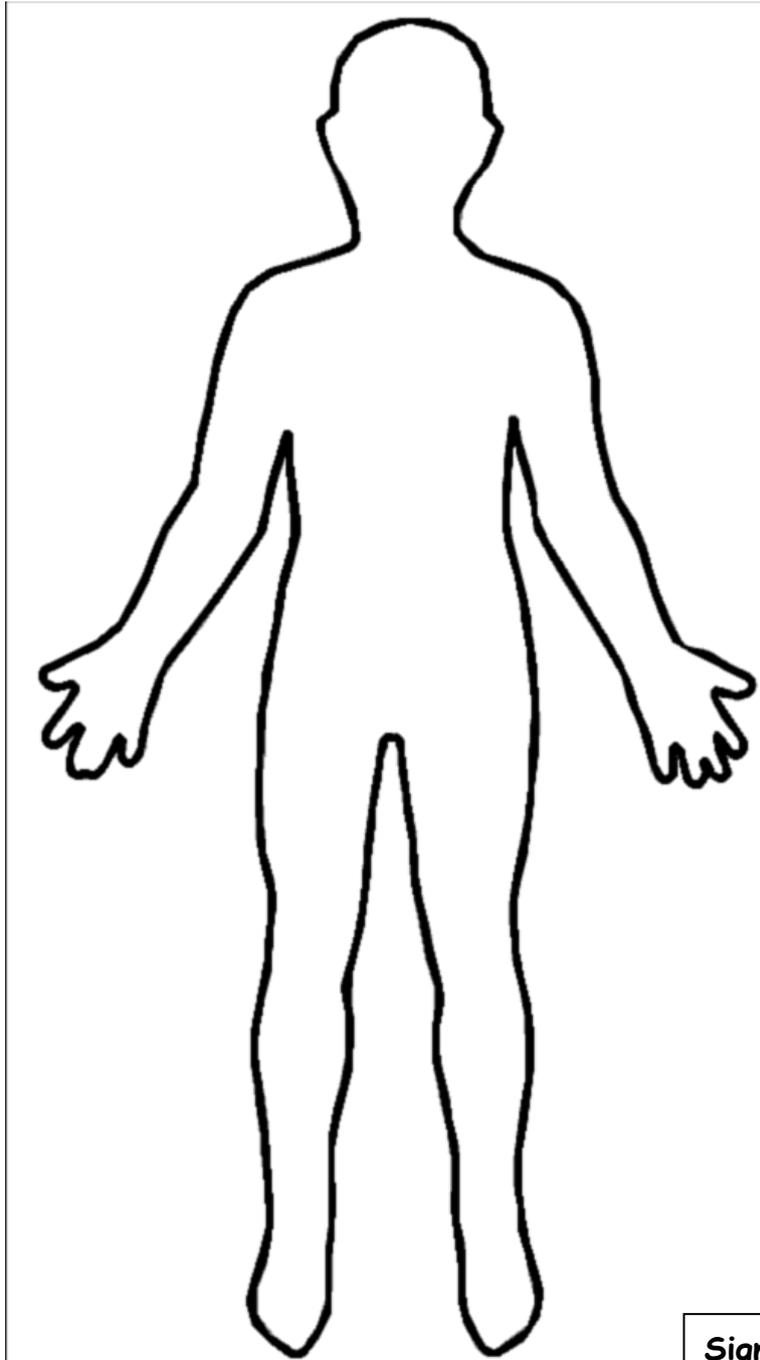
Appendix 6

Child Protection: Procedures and Practice

Code:

Date:

Indicate signs of injury, if necessary, on outline below:



Signed:

Appendix 7

Child Protection: Procedures and Practice

Monitoring Suggestions

Teachers are the only professionals who are in regular day to day contact with school-aged children and, because of that, we have a key role in situations where there are suspicions that a child is being abused. When there are such concerns, it is essential to keep an objective and factual record of all the information available (DES Procedures, p. 21/22, paragraph 3.6). We may also be requested, following a child protection conference, to keep a child under observation in a manner that is not inconsistent with our existing duties (DES Guidelines, p. 28, paragraph 4.5.7). This hand-out has been created to assist teachers in this regard.

Useful Hint: Enter your observations under the various headings as appropriate. This will help to categorise your observations and enable you to note an emerging pattern of a deteriorating situation.

Possible Areas for Monitoring	Best Practice Suggestions
Name of School Using agreed record form ensure school standard is applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record observation using code to protect anonymity of child.• Keep in secure place• Strictly confidential.
Attendance and Punctuality Dates & times are important, since patterns or absence or lateness can be very revealing. If late, note if brought to school by parent/carer/older sibling & record any explanation offered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remember to sign & date each entry.
Appearance, Hygiene and Care Record observations of the child's appearance, for example, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing, no lunch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record observations in chronological order.
Physical Injury Give detailed description including, in the child's or carer's own words, if any explanation is offered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include sketch of injury, if appropriate.
Child's Behaviour A child may become increasingly aggressive, tense, unresponsive or show other signs of distress. Any sexualised behaviour should be noted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe what you have observed factually.
Child's Language The child may not have the language/be afraid to verbalise clearly what is happening. They may however drop hints or refer to what is happening obliquely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record child's exact words, not the adult equivalents.

Possible Areas for Monitoring	Best Practice Suggestions
<p>Child's Drawing, Writing or Play A young child may show few signs of abuse when he/she experiences a sense of security in a busy, structured classroom setting therefore careful observation of the child in less formal or unstructured settings are important. Always include the context in your record eg "when returning from the PE Room", "during small break", "when lining up for home time."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember context can be very important.
<p>Mood Changes Child may, for example, become quiet and tense towards end of day or if collected by a certain adult. This might also happen on certain days or before or after certain activities. Again, remember to include the context in your recording.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note time, context and situation - facts only.

Remember monitoring should be systematic, continuous and requires perseverance.