

# Scoil Réalta na Maidine

## Child Safeguarding Statement

---

Scoil Réalta na Maidine 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 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of Scoil Réalta na Maidine 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 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement.
- 2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is: Bernadette Sheehy
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is: Margaret Lane
- 4 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. The school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare. The school will:
  - a. recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations
  - b. fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children
  - c. fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
  - d. 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
  - e. develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
  - f. fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters
- 5 The following procedures/measures are in place:
  - a. 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 2017 and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the DES website

- b. 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 DES and available on the DES website
  - c. 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:
    - i. Has provided each member of staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
    - ii. Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
    - iii. Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
    - iv. Encourages Board of Management members to avail of relevant training
    - v. The Board of Management maintains records of all staff and board member training
  - d. 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 2017, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015
  - e. In this school, the Board has appointed the above named DLP as the 'relevant person' (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the school's child safeguarding statement.
- 6 All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.
- 7 In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, 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 attached as an appendix to these procedures.
- 8 The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school's website, the DES website or will be made available on request by the school.
- 9 This statement has been published on the school's website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parent Association 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.
- 10 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

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: [Signature]  
Chairperson of BoM

Signed: [Signature]  
Principal/Secretary to the BoM

Date: 26/03/19.

Date: 26/03/19

## Mandatory Template 1: Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment Template

Written Assessment of Risk of Scoil Réalta na Maidine

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 2017*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Scoil Réalta na Maidine.

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 -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training of school personnel in child protection matters</li> <li>• One to one teaching</li> <li>• Care of pupils with special needs, including intimate care needs</li> <li>• Recruitment of school personnel</li> <li>• Volunteers and External Coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harm not recognised or reported properly and promptly by school staff</li> <li>• Harm by a member of school personnel</li> <li>• Harm by school personnel while a child is receiving intimate care</li> <li>• Harm by school personnel</li> <li>• Harm to pupils by external personnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safeguarding Statement and DES procedures made available to all staff. DLP and DDLP to attend face to face training. All staff to view online training module (education.ie)</li> <li>• School has procedures in place for one to one teaching. All doors have a glass panel</li> <li>• School has procedures in place for intimate care</li> <li>• Recruitment follows correct procedures. Personnel are Garda vetted</li> <li>• Garda Vetting required. External coaches and volunteers are supervised by school staff</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Teachers undertaking training placement in the school</li> <li>• Students participating in work experience</li> <li>• Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe</li> <li>• Care of children with specific vulnerability needs such as ethnic minorities, Traveller pupils, LGBT pupil, pupils in care or on CPNS</li> <li>• Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils</li> <li>• Use of toilet facilities within the school building</li> <li>• School Outings including those involving overnight stays and foreign travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harm to pupils by student teacher</li> <li>• Harm to pupils by inappropriate interaction between work experience student and school pupil</li> <li>• Subjects not taught</li> <li>• Bullying by other pupils</li> <li>• Harm from other pupils. Harm from unknown adults in the vicinity</li> <li>• Harm/injury by other pupils</li> <li>• Harm to pupils due to inadequate supervision or preparation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garda Vetted. Trainee teachers are supervised by Scoil Réalta na Maidine teachers</li> <li>• Students always work under the direct supervision of a Scoil Réalta na Maidine teacher</li> <li>• SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe are taught in all classes each year. Teachers monthly reports reflect this</li> <li>• Anti-Bullying Policy. Code of Behaviour</li> <li>• Arrival and Dismissal Policy</li> <li>• Classes all have written toilet protocols and pupils are reminded of these frequently</li> <li>• Adequate staffing provided. Pupils always overseen by Scoil Réalta na Maidine staff. Health and Safety Statement</li> </ul>
---	--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of off-site facilities for school activities</li> <li>• School transport arrangements for pupils with special needs, including use of bus escorts</li> <li>• Managing challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use of restraint if required</li> <li>• Administration of medicines</li> <li>• Administration of First Aid</li> <li>• Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils</li> <li>• Use of school premises by other organisations during the school day</li> <li>• Participation by pupils in religious ceremonies external to the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harm to pupils due to inadequate supervision or preparation</li> <li>• Injury/harm to pupils while on the bus</li> <li>• Injury to pupils</li> <li>• Harm/Injury to pupil through incorrect administration</li> <li>• Harm/Injury to pupil through incorrect procedure</li> <li>• Harm to pupils by other pupils</li> <li>• Harm to pupils due to inadequate supervision</li> <li>• Harm to pupils by unknown adults in the vicinity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate staffing provided. Pupils always supervised by Scoil Réalta na Maidine staff. Health and Safety Statement</li> <li>• Bus escorts are trained and Garda Vetted. Scoil Réalta na Maidine staff supervise arrival and dismissal of pupils travelling by bus</li> <li>• Health and Safety Statement. Code of Behaviour. Use of restraint ONLY where a pupil is in clear and immediate danger</li> <li>• Administration of Medicines Policy</li> <li>• 4 Trained First Responders on staff</li> <li>• Anti-Bullying Policy</li> <li>• Pupils are supervised by Scoil Réalta na Maidine staff</li> <li>• Scoil Réalta na Maidine staff supervise pupils at all times</li> </ul>
--	--	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Information and Communication Technology</li> <li>• Use of video/photography other media to record events</li> <li>• Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour including detention of pupils</li> <li>• After school use of premises by other organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to inappropriate material</li> <li>• Inappropriate use of images</li> <li>• Harm to pupil by school personnel</li> <li>• Harm to pupil by adults working for these organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Behaviour. Internet Filter on School Broadband Internet Safety Workshops</li> <li>• Addition of pupil names is not permitted on any images. Parent permission required</li> <li>• Sanctions are issued in a fair and appropriate manner, staff guided by Code of Behaviour</li> <li>• Written parental permission expected when pupils stay on the premises for after school activities</li> </ul>
--	---	---

**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*

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 has been completed by the Board of Management on 26 March 2019. It shall be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed:  Date: 26/03/19

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:  Date: 26/3/19

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management



## **Scoil Réalta na Maidine**

# **Reasonable Grounds for Concern/Threshold of Harm**

---

The Reasonable Grounds for Concern 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/III-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.

## Scoil Réalta na Maidine

# Circumstances which give rise to Concern in Relation to Child Abuse

---

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.

## **Scoil Réalta na Maidine**

# **Procedure for dealing with a Disclosure from a Member of School Staff**

---

1. Any Member of the school staff (teacher, SNA, ancillary staff) who receives an allegation, or suspects that a child is being abused or is in danger of being abused, will report his/her concerns immediately to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), unless the concern relates to the DLP. In that case, the report will be made to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
2. Where a Member of the school staff has a child protection concern regarding the DLP he/she will report directly to the Chairman of the Board of Management.
3. The DLP will open a secure file on the case and record carefully the details of the concerns or suspicions. The DLP will ensure that the proper reporting procedures are followed.
4. Where the member of the school staff is a registered teacher and therefore a mandated person, the teacher will work with the DLP to ensure that the proper reporting procedures are followed.
5. The DLP and teacher will consider whether there are reasonable grounds for concern and if these meet the thresholds for abuse. If they agree, they make a joint mandated report to Tusla.
6. If the DLP and teacher are not sure whether the thresholds for abuse have been reached, the DLP will consult Tusla and then follow the advice given. The DLP will clearly explain that he/she is seeking advice and will not give identifying details at this stage to Tusla. The details of this conversation, the advice given and the actions taken on foot of that advice must be carefully recorded by the DLP and reported to the teacher.
7. Where Tusla recommends that a mandated report be made, the DLP and teacher will do so without delay.
8. Where the DLP and teacher are not satisfied that the thresholds for abuse have been reached, the DLP will submit a report as a concern to Tusla, rather than as a mandated report. The teacher does not have to make a separate report.

9. Where the DLP and teacher are not sure whether or not the thresholds for abuse have been reached, but have reasonable grounds for concern, they will make a joint Report to Tusla.
  
10. Where the DLP decides not to report to Tusla, he/she will inform the teacher and will advise him/her that he/she may proceed to seek advice from Tusla and make a report or mandated report. The DLP will give the teacher a clear written statement as to the reasons why he/she did not make a report to Tusla. The DLP will retain this statement in the file and, where the teacher makes a report to Tusla, that report will also be retained in the file.
  
11. The DLP will now decide whether or not to inform the family of the child that a report has been made to Tusla concerning their child. While it is good practice to inform the family, the following reasons will mean that the family will not be informed by the DLP:
  - a. If the DLP feels that informing the family would put the child in further danger
  
  - b. If the DLP feels that informing the family would impede Tusla's risk assessment of the child's situation
  
  - c. If the DLP feels that informing the family would put school personnel in danger
  
  - d. The DLP may consult with Tusla if unsure
  
  - e. The DLP will record in the file details of informing the family or, if they have not been informed, the reasons why and any advice given by Tusla

## **Scoil Réalta na Maidine**

# **When a Child makes a Disclosure – what to say and do**

---

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 soon 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**

Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner

- '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 he was right to tell you
- Let him 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



## Scoil Réalta na Maidine

# Child Abuse – Neglect, Emotional, Physical

---

### 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 the child's 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 over-protectiveness
- 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.

## Scoil Réalta na Maidine

# Child Abuse - Sexual

---

### 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.

## Scoil Réalta na Maidine

# Summary of Record Keeping Requirements

---

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 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 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 Síochana 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 Board of Management 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 Board of Management 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 Board of Management 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.

## Scoil Réalta na Maidine

# Summary of Reporting Procedures

---

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 2017](#) 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.

### **When a Registered Teacher has a Child Protection Concern (Procedures 5.1.1/5.1.2)**

- 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

### **When someone else in the School Community has a Child Protection Concern**

- **SNA/Ancillary Staff** – Report concern to the DLP (Procedures 5.1.1/5.1.2)
- **Parent/Guardian** – Report concern to the DLP (Procedure 5.6)

### **Actions of DLP on becoming aware of a Concern**

- Open a Secure File – use child's Clar Uimhir
- Record all details of the Concern
- Consult
  - Resource Bundle and PAMs
  - Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017
  - Children First National Guidelines 2017
  - Commence Reporting Procedure

### **Reporting Procedures (Procedures 5.3/5.4)**

#### **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 Gardai.**

### **Records of Reporting**

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

### **When the DLP decides not to make a Report to Tusla (Procedure 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 of your next oversight report to the Board of Management

### **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
- It 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 see advice from Tusla regarding informing the family and record all communication with the family or Tusla in the File.

### **Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) (Procedure 5.5)**

The Principal (normally DLP) will make a CPOR at every Board of Management meeting. It will detail:

- Any allegations of abuse raised in relation to school staff since the last Board of Management meeting
- Other child protection concerns raised in relation to any child since the last Board of Management meeting
- Child protection concerns regarding alleged bullying behaviour since the last Board of Management meeting

## **Tusla Reporting Forms**

Tusla has 2 Reporting Forms:

- Child Protection and Welfare Report Form
- Retrospective Abuse Report Form