



**Coláiste na Carráige**

**Child Protection  
Policy**

## **Aim**

Coláiste na Carraige aims to provide the highest standard of care to its students and staff. See Child Protection Policy Statement Appendix 1.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person carries out the duties of the Designated Liaison Person in the absence of the latter.

## **Duties of School Personnel**

The duties of school personnel are to:

- Provide the highest possible standard of care.
- Consider the possibility of abuse.
- Observe for possible signs of abuse.
- Record Information.
- Report concerns to D.L.P or D.D.L.P.
- D.L.P. reports to Health Board
- D.L.P. reports to Board of Management.

## **Duties of DLP**

The duties of the DLP are to:

- Liaise with Outside Agencies.
- Be knowledgeable about Child Protection.
- Receive relevant information.
- Be a resource person to staff.

## **Dealing with Disclosures**

- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Assume the child is very distressed.
- Trust is being placed in you.
- Take care not to damage that trust.
- Listen/facilitate the telling of the problem.
- Do not make judgemental statements about the accused.
- Question only for clarification.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Stay calm, make no extreme reactions.
- Try to make the experience positive for the child.
- Use tact and sensitivity re: confidentiality.
- If action is needed, others need to be informed.
- Reassure the child, offer support and protection.
- Record the event immediately (child's words).

## **Record Keeping**

- Keep written records of all information available.
- Record what was observed.

- Record when it was observed.
- Describe/sketch injuries.
- Record quotes from the child.
- Sign, date and submit to D.L.P.
- Apply High Confidentiality to the document.
- Must provide written report for Child Protection Conference.

**School personnel who receive an allegation or have a suspicion re abuse should report to the D.L.P. without delay.**

**The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.**

### **Actions of the D.L.P.**

- Reasonable grounds.
- If concerned/unsure, consult the Duty Social Worker(DSW) for advice, not naming the child.
- It may be helpful to consult parents to establish grounds for concern(unless there is a danger to the child).
- If the D.L.P. decides not to report, the employee who made the initial report is given a written report outlining the reasons for not doing so.
- This employee is then free to consult with/report to the HSE him/herself.

### **Role of the HSE**

- The HSE is governed by the Health Act 1970 and the Child Care Act 1991.
- Identify Children in danger.
- HSE decides on action necessary.
- Hold Child Protection Conferences.
- Must inform school of outcome of investigation/enquiry.
- School Employees.

## **Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse by School Employees**

### **Employer's Responsibilities**

The employer has the following responsibilities:

- Their first duty is to protect the child.(No child must be exposed to unnecessary risk).
- They should take measures proportionate to the level of risk.
- There are duties and responsibilities towards the staff.
- The same reporting procedures apply.

- The D.L.P. supports the child's needs.
- The D.L.P. must inform the employer of the allegation.
- **Eileen Doherty, Donegal ETB, Ard O'Donnell, Letterkenny is the Employee Welfare Officer. She may be contacted at 086 3800311.**
- The allegation must be dealt with sensitively.
- Has a duty to ensure a full and fair enquiry.

### **Action by Employer**

The employer should/must:

- Inform the employee that an allegation has been made, the nature of the allegation and whether it has been sent to the HSE.
- Give the employee any written records(copy).
- Offer the employee the opportunity to respond in writing.
- If unsure whether the allegation warrants absence from school, the employer should consult with the Child Care Manager(HSE).
- Seek legal advice.
- Not take any action that would unreasonably penalise the employee.

### **Legal Framework**

- Confidentiality.
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.
- Qualified Privilege.
- Freedom of Information Acts 1997 & 2003.
- Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003

### **Protocol**

- Protocol authorising immediate action
- Written Protocol
- Natural justice; presumption of innocence; fair procedures.

### **Peer Abuse**

- Normal Sexual Experimentation.
- Abuse Reactive Behaviour
- Sexually Obsessive Behaviour
- Abuse by Adolescents/young people
- Meet parents separately
- Inform HSE/ Treatments
- Minimise risk of re-occurrence

### **Bullying**

- Repeated Aggression
- Verbal
- Psychological

- Physical
- Bullying by adult may be abuse
- Deal with it promptly.

### **Reporting Procedure**

- D.L.P reports as already outlined
- Inform the employer
- Strictest confidence to be applied
- Accused may address employer
- Accused gets copy of documentation
- Give accused opportunity to reply
- Report response to HSE
- Consult Child Care Manager re: Absenting employee
- Inform Department of Education and Skills

## **Appendix 1**

# **Coláiste na Carraige**

## **Child Protection Policy**

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 **Coláiste na Carraige** 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: **Pádraig Ó Léime.**
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person(DDLDP) is: **Mary Doherty.**
4. In its policies, practices and activities, **Coláiste na Carraige** 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 the 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. The following list of policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to child protection: Anti-Bullying, Admissions and Enrolment, Code of Behaviour, Relationships and Sexuality, Pastoral Care, Health and Safety Statement, Extra Curricular Activities, Special Educational Needs and Substance Abuse. The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.
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.

This policy was adopted and ratified by the Board of Management of Coláiste na Carraige.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

### Resources

- Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Children First
- Department of Health and Children
- Children First
- Department of Education and Skills
- Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools

### Definition of a Child

A child is anyone who is under 18 years, who is not or was not married.

### Types of Abuse

**Neglect:** "An omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to affection from adults, medical care." Child First: 3:2:1

**Emotional Abuse:** "When a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between care-giver and the child." Children First: 3:2:1

**Physical Abuse:** "Any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child." Children First: 3:2:1

**Sexual Abuse:** "When a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others." Children First: 3:2:1

### Signs and Symptoms

#### Neglect

##### Physical

Tiredness  
Hunger  
Dirty/Smelly  
Failure to thrive  
Learning Difficulties  
Age inappropriate dress

##### Behavioural

Lack of age appropriate supervision  
Low self esteem  
Child as parent(parentified)  
Caring for younger siblings  
Poor hygiene  
Untreated illness

## **Emotional Abuse**

### **Physical**

Sudden speech disorders  
Eating disorders  
Self harm  
Attention seeking behaviour  
Frequent vomiting

### **Behavioural**

Mood changes/depression  
Rocking, thumb sucking  
Poor peer relationships/isolation

## **Physical Abuse**

### **Physical**

Bruising  
Repeated injuries  
Black eyes  
Mouth injuries  
Burns/Scalds  
Bites  
Bloodstains  
Fractures  
Implement marks  
Explanation of above

### **Behavioural**

Changes in behaviour  
Regressive behaviour  
Poor at making friends  
Drop in performance  
Level of sexual awareness  
Reluctance to remove clothing  
Reluctance to go home  
Change in attendance pattern  
Mood change  
Running away  
Substance abuse

## **Sexual Abuse**

### **Physical**

Eating disorders  
Stomach pains/headache  
Bruising

### **Behavioural**

Inappropriate language, sexual knowledge for age group  
Chronic depression/low self esteem  
Substance abuse  
Self harm

## **Why Children Don't Tell**

- Fear of abuser
- Fear of consequences
- Fear of not being believed
- Guilt
- Abuse has been normalised
- Taboo Subject
- Bribes
- Language

## **Why Children Do Tell**

- Meet a person they can trust
- Begin to learn what is normal
- Become aware of their suffering
- To prevent it happening to siblings and/or others