



## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Policy Summary**

#### **Rationale**

The Board of Management (BOM) of Gurraneasig N.S. has adopted the Department of Children and Youth Affairs "***Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011***".

#### **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of Our School**

Gurraneasig N.S. seeks to help the children to grow and develop into healthy, confident, mature adults, capable of realising their full potential as human beings. We strive to create a happy, safe environment for the children where they feel secure and knowing that if they have concerns, they will be:

- listened to with understanding and respect
- acted upon.

#### **Aims**

1. To raise awareness of child abuse namely: emotional, physical, sexual and neglect, amongst all members of our school community including: the BOM, teachers, pupils, parents, SNA's and all ancillary staff.
2. To put in place clear procedures for all the school personnel dealing with suspicions and allegations of child abuse.
3. To identify curricular content and resources that contributes to the prevention of child abuse and to enable children to properly deal with abuse if it occurs.

#### **Guidelines:**

**The guidelines are laid out as follows:**

##### **1.0 Appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

- a) The BOM appointed Ms Maeve Tighe as the DLP and Mrs. Byrne as the Deputy DLP.
- b) The Acting Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Ms Niamh McGrath
- c) The position of the DLP will be addressed at the first meeting of each new BOM.
- d) In the event of the DLP leaving the school, the Chair of the BOM will nominate a staff member to act as DLP, in a temporary capacity, until the next BOM meeting.

##### **2.0 Roles, Responsibilities and Guidelines**

- a) The BOM has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their pupils.
- b) The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection in the school.
- c) All staff have a duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect children from harm.

### **3.0 Role of the BOM**

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

### **4.0 Role of the Staff Members (Teachers, SNA's, Caretaker, Secretary, etc)**

It is the responsibility of all staff members to familiarise themselves with the ***Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011***

### **Guidelines for Staff Members in Handling ...**

#### **1. Disclosures From Children**

- a) 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 child's trust. This should not be a formal interview.
- b) The staff member should obtain only necessary relevant facts. It is not the responsibility of school personnel to investigate allegations of abuse.
- c) The DLP should then be informed and given relevant records.
- d) If the suspected abuser is the DLP, then the suspicion and any records will be passed on to the BOM Chairperson who will proceed as per guidelines.

#### **2. Suspicions of Abuse**

- a) Staff members who suspect abuse should refer to the ***Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011***
- b) Staff members should observe and record over time the dates / signs / symptoms / behaviour causing them concern.
- c) Staff members should inform the DLP and pass on all records.

### **5.0 Role of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

- a) The DLP acts as a liaison with outside agencies.
- b) The DLP will inform all school personnel of the availability of the ***Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011*** in the school.
- c) The DLP will be available to staff for consultation regarding suspicions or disclosures of abuse and will keep records of these consultations.
- d) The DLP will seek advice from the HSE.
- e) The DLP will report suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the HSE and / or An Garda Síochána based on this advice.
- f) The DLP will maintain proper records in a secure, confidential manner and in a secure location.
- g) The DLP will keep up to date on current developments regarding child protection.

### **6.0 Case Conferences (Child Protection Meetings)**

- a) A request is made from the HSE through the DLP who will consult with the BOM Chairperson.
- b) The school employee may complete a report for the conference / meeting.
- c) The school employee will be advised if children / parents / guardians are going to be present. The school employee may contact the BOM Chairperson for advice regarding the Child Protection Meeting.

- d) 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.
- e) 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.
- f) Teachers attending a Child Protection Case Conference / Meeting will familiarise themselves with the protocol on pages 13 & 14 of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures 2001, DES.

## **7.0 Organisational Implications**

School procedures already in place and future procedures being put in place will be examined with reference to the ***Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011*** and modified accordingly.

The following subject matters are addressed in this policy as follows:

- **Accidents.** All accidents will be recorded in our Accident Book and investigated.
- **Attendance.** With regards to child protection we will pay particular attention to trends in non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect / physical / emotional abuse.
- **Behaviour.** If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature the DLP will be notified who will record it and respond appropriately.
- **Bullying.** If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive then the matter will be referred to the DLP.
- **Communication.** If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. If teachers have to communicate with pupils on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open,
- **Induction of New Pupils.** All parents will be informed of the programme in place in the school that deal with personal development e.g. RSE, Walk Tall and SPHE. All new parents will be given a copy of the schools Enrolment, Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.
- **Induction of New Staff.** The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the ***Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011***
- **Record Keeping.** Teachers will keep each child's file updated with results of assessments, dates and details of meetings with parents and notes from parents. These are kept in the teacher's filing cabinet, locked at all times. Roll books will be updated daily. Sensitive information regarding children will be shared on a need-to-know basis. All educational files of pupils who no longer attend our school are filed in a filing cabinet located in the Principals office for a period of no less than 5 years.
- **Supervision.** The school Supervision Policy will be adhered to by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of the children at all break times. A break time yard duty rota will be displayed on the notice board in the Staff Room.

- **Visibility.** Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the schoolyard. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or sheds where there is no staff supervision. Children can not leave the school yard or engage with adults who are outside the school yard.
- **Visitors.** Staff on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the school yard and will ascertain their intentions. All visitors will be accompanied in the discharge of their business.

## **8.0 Curriculum Implications**

### **Introduction**

In Gurraneasig National School, all children are and will be cherished. To fulfil the general aims of the Primary Curriculum we will:

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

### **Success Criteria**

Evaluation as to the success of this policy will be made using the following criteria:

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

### **Ratified by Board of Management:**

Signed Mary O'Donnell  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 1.12.20.