

Callystown National School

Policy on Child Protection and Code of Practice

As a school, we have an obligation to provide students with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well-being and protect them from harm. School personnel are especially well-placed to observe changes in behaviour, failure to develop, or outward signs of abuse in children.

- The Board of Management of Callystown National School will fully uphold “*Children First Act*” of 2015, issued by the Department of Health & Children, September 2015. The Board will ensure that “Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools 2017” will be employed by all school personnel.
- The Board nominates Ambrose McGinnity as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) to act as a liaison with outside agencies such as health boards and as a resource person to any staff having child protection concerns.
- In the absence of Ambrose McGinnity, Julie Anne Slevin will act as Deputy Designated Liaison Person.
- All teachers are mandated persons.
- The Board will ensure that appropriate and on-going training as necessary will be available for the DLP and the DDLP.
- The Board will ensure that on-going training will be provided to all staff members and that all staff will have completed the on-line training certificate provided by Tusla.
- The Board fully endorses arrangements for the vetting of teaching and non-teaching staff as outlined in Circular 0094/2006 from the Department of Education and Science in June 2006.
- The Board will ensure that all school staff, teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their obligations under the guideline detailed in “*Children First*” and the procedures to be followed in the event of concern. All staff will be given a copy of the school policy on child protection and be referred to www.Tusla.ie for a copy of the children first guidelines.
- The Board will issue a Child Protection Statement at the beginning of each School year and display same in a prominent place in the school foyer.

- The Board will ensure that a Child Statement Risk Assessment will take place and the report of same will also be displayed in the school Foyer. This assessment will be reviewed on an on-going basis.
- The Board recognizes that it has two duties of care. The primary duty is the protection, safety and welfare of the children attending Callystown National School. The Board, as an employer, also has duties and responsibilities towards its employees.
- As an employer, the Board will seek legal advice if an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee.
- The Board will adhere to the protocol outlined in “Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures 2017”, under Chapter 7: “Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse by School Employees”, to authorise any actions required to protect the children in its care. The Board notes that school employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations. Any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively. The employee should be treated fairly, which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry. The Board accepts that the principles of natural justice and fair procedures must be adhered to.
- The Board believes that the academic, personal and social development of children flourishes in a culture where good relationships are encouraged, people feel valued and respected and appropriate support is available for those in difficulty.
- The Board is committed to the maintenance of an environment where children feel secure, where they are encouraged to express themselves and are listened to. All children in the school will be made aware that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried. In addition, opportunities will be included in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to keep them safe. (e.g. Stay Safe Programme, Relationship and Sexuality Education programme and S.P.H.E. curriculum).
- The Board of Management undertakes to make this Child Protection Policy statement available to all parents and guardians at the time of enrolment and on a regular basis thereafter. This policy statement will also be available on the school’s website.
- This policy statement regarding Child Protection at Callystown National School applies to all staff, members of the Board of Management, volunteers, and contractors working in the school.
- This policy statement will be subject to review at the start of each academic year.

We at Callystown National School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of our pupils. We will carry out this duty through our pastoral care system which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment and which values all of our students. One way in which we seek to protect our students is by helping them to learn about the risks of possible abuse, to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and to acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe. We do this by teaching the Stay Safe Programme as part of our SPHE curriculum. Members of staff will all have the opportunity to attend In-Service training from the Child Abuse Prevention Programme Team.

The staff of our school will adopt a Code of Practice for their behaviour towards students (see below).

The purpose of the following procedures is to protect our students by ensuring that everyone who works in the school has clear guidance on the action that is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. Our procedures follow those outlined in the Children First Document and as outlined in the D.E.S. guidelines. Our overriding concern is always the care, welfare and safety of each student.

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse may be perpetrated in the following ways:

Neglect. The persistent or significant lack of care or the failure to protect a child from exposure to danger resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development.

Physical. Physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual. Exploitation of a child for another's own sexual gratification; the involvement of children in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or which violate normal family roles.

Emotional. Persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical, and/or behavioural development of a child.

Bullying: Repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, that is conducted by an individual or a group against others.

Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse:

If a student makes a disclosure to a member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a student, the member of staff must act promptly.

She/he should not investigate - this is a matter for the social services - but should report these concerns immediately to the Principal. In Callystown National School, the Principal is the Designated Liaison Person for such issues. The Principal will decide whether, in the best interest of the child, the matter needs to be referred. The Principal and teacher/Reportee will follow procedures of reporting as set out in 2017 procedures Chapter 5. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately. Procedures as set out in Chapter 7 in the procedures book will be followed.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the staff member receiving the complaint should immediately inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

It should be noted that information given to staff members about possible child abuse cannot be held “in confidence”. In the interest of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

The Principal will ensure that there is an Oversight Report provided to the Board of Management at each Board Meeting.

Code of conduct for staff members:

This code is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct. It does not seek to cover all eventualities but to advise in general terms and to indicate what might be considered to be good practice.

See appendix: *Callystown National School Child Protection Procedures*