

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The Board of Management of Coláiste Pobail Setanta has adopted as policy the Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools as published by the Department of Education & Science and is guided by the DES circular 0065/2011 and Children First 'National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' 2011 . Circular 0065/2011 outlines new 'oversight arrangements and these are incorporated into the guidelines which follow. Copies of all relevant documents are available from the Principal or may be viewed on www.education.ie/ or www.dcyia.ie

Designated Liaison Person: Eileen O'Rourke

Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Mark Dowling

If a member of staff should receive a report of a Child Protection issue

You should:

- Listen compassionately
- Use open, non-specific questions where, what is being reported is unclear
- Make a careful record of the report, using the young person's own words
- If the person reporting is an adult, invite him/her to provide a written account of the matter
- Indicate what will happen next
- Report the matter immediately to the Designated Liaison Person
- Keep the matter strictly confidential

You should not:

- Question the person reporting, other than to seek clarification
- Make any judgemental statements
- Give any undertaking of secrecy
- Start to investigate

In the event that the Designated Liaison Person decides not to report the allegation to the Health Service Executive, the member of staff who reported the matter will be given a written statement as to why action is not being taken

The member of staff who reports an allegation to the Designated Liaison Person may be asked to attend a Child Protection Conference. The DLP will consult with the Board of Management before responding to such a request

A member of staff reporting an allegation or suspicion in good faith has the legal protection of qualified privilege at common law and is also protected under 'The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act' 1998. The Freedom of Information Acts and the Data Protection Acts will apply to records.

Summary of Board of Managements Responsibility in Child Protection

- To provide students with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well being and protect them from harm
- To adopt a child protection policy in accordance with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post Primary Schools
- To adopt without modification the child protection procedures for post primary schools as outlined in circular 0065/2011
- To designate a senior member of staff as the Designated Liaison Person for the school. It is expected that the Designated Liaison Person will normally be the Principal. The name of the DIP shall be prominently displayed in an appropriate public place in the school.
- To provide for another person to assume responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person should the Designated Liaison Person be unavailable for any reason, this person to be known as the Deputy Designated Liaison Person
- To ensure that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely
- To adhere to DES requirements for Garda vetting in respect of all school personnel and apply thorough recruitment, selection and appointment procedures to all employees and volunteers
- To ensure that the school's child protection policy is available to parents/guardians of the school community

The Designated Liaison Person will inform the Board that a report involving a student in the school has been submitted to the Health Service Executive. The Designated Liaison Person will inform the Board of cases where information is sought from the HSE but where no report is made. The DLP will be responsible to maintain all relevant contact details for HSE and An Garda Síochána.

If the allegation is against a school employee, the Chairperson meets the employee privately, gives details of allegation to the employee with copy of related documentation. The employee is afforded an opportunity to respond in writing to the Board. If the Protocol Authorising Immediate Action has been invoked by the Principal, an emergency meeting of the Board is called. Legal advice should be sought. If the nature of the allegation warrants immediate action, or the ratification of action taken under the Protocol, the Board will direct that the employee absent him/herself from school with immediate effect. The strictest confidence is to be observed

Any further action required by the Board will be informed by the investigations conducted by the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána.

Such action will be taken in compliance with the Disciplinary Procedures which applies for our school and Board of Management.

Finally the Board undertakes to ensure that a review of the school Child Protection policy will be undertaken on an annual basis and will put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the policy which have been identified as requiring further improvement.