

Child Protection Policy

Introduction and Rationale:

The staff of Ramsgrange NS compiled this document in June 2011 as a response to recent changes in legislation. It was updated in November 2011, in response to the publication of the following documents:

- Circular 65/2011 - 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' (DES)
- 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' (Dept of Children and Youth Affairs)
- Child Protection Guidelines for Primary and Post Primary Schools (DES)

This document further develops previous policy in this area and takes account of the provisions of the following pieces of legislation:

- The Education Act 1998
- The Education Welfare Act 2000
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003
- Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003

A copy of the school's child protection policy which includes the names of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP has been made available to all school personnel and the Parents' Association and will be readily accessible to parents on request. 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

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Our school ethos is one, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment where all pupils feel valued. This document strengthens and protects that ethos.

Aims:

- To establish and maintain an environment where children feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- To ensure that all staff members understand their responsibilities in being alert to signs of abuse and that they know the correct procedures for reporting and recording any such incidences
- To ensure that parents have an understanding of the legal obligations placed on the school and staff to report incidences of child abuse
- To ensure that children know that there are adults in the school that they can approach if they are worried

Confidentiality

All information regarding concerns of possible abuse should only be shared on a need to know basis in the interests of the child. The test is whether or not the person has any legitimate involvement or role in dealing with the issue.

Giving information to those who need to have that information for the protection of a child who may have been or has been abused, is not a breach of confidentiality.

The DLP who is submitting a report to the Health Board or An Garda Síochána should inform a parent/guardian, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place that child at further risk. A decision not to inform a parent/guardian should be briefly recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.

In emergency situations, where the Health Board cannot be contacted, and the child appears to be at immediate risk, An Garda Síochána should be contacted immediately. A child should not be left in a dangerous situation pending Health Board intervention.

Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, provides immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of An Garda Síochána.

This means that even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith making the report.

The act provides significant protection for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including dismissal. (Child Protection DES Book page 6).

Qualified Privilege

While the legal protection outlined above only applies to reports made to the appropriate authorities (i.e. The Health Boards and An Garda Síochána), Common Law qualified privilege continues to apply as heretofore. Consequently, should a Board of Management member or school personnel furnish information with regard to suspicions of child abuse to the DPL or the Board of Management chairman, such communication would be regarded under common law as having qualified privilege.

A further definition of qualified privilege is outlined in Section 1.4.2 and 1.4.3, page 6 of Child Protection – Guidelines & Procedures.

Freedom of Information Act 1997:

Reports made to Health Boards may be subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1997, which enables members of the public to obtain access to personal information relating to them which is in the possession of public bodies. However the act also provides that public bodies may refuse access to information obtained by them in confidence.

Curricular Implications

The Stay Safe Programme is an integral part of the SPHE curriculum in our school which addresses personal safety. All five topics in 'Stay Safe' are done over a two year period. Each topic is introduced and worked on in year one and built upon in year two. Lessons are undertaken with this programme for a two month period.

Other resources are the RSE Programme.

Role of Designated Liaison Person

Appointment of the Designated Liaison Person

The Board of Management has designated the Principal, Mrs Lorraine Cooper, as the person who has specific responsibility for Child Protection. She will be the Designated Liaison Person for the school and all dealings with health boards, An Garda Síochána and other parties, in connection with allegations of abuse. Those other parties should be advised that they should conduct all matters pertaining to the processing or investigation of alleged child abuse through the Designated Liaison Person.

Where the Designated Liaison Person is unavailable, the Deputy Principal, Mrs Ciara Morrissey, will be nominated to assume her responsibilities, as the Deputy Designated Liaison Person.

The Designated Liaison Person or her nominated replacement, shall immediately inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management of the school that a report involving a pupil in the school has been submitted to the relevant Health Board or the Gardai.

The DLP shall also inform the school authority of the number of cases where the DLP submitted a report to the HSE or Gardai or sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made. At each Board of Management meeting, the Principal's report shall include the number of all such cases and this shall be recorded in the minutes of the board meeting.

Actions to be taken by the DLP

If a school employee receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a pupil is being abused, he/she should report the matter to the DLP. The need for confidentiality is essential. Therefore the child concerned will be identified on any written reports, only by their number on the school register.

- If the school employee and the DLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for suspicion or allegation, the DLP should report the matter immediately to the relevant Health Board
- A report should be made in person, by phone or in writing to the social worker on duty. Personal contact with the social worker is preferable, to allow for the transfer of as much information as possible
- In the event of an emergency or the non-availability of Health Board staff, the report should be made to An Garda Síochána.
- The report should include as much information as possible on the Standard Reporting form
- The Chairperson of the Board of Management should be informed at this point
- The parents/guardians of the child will be informed also, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place the child at further risk. A decision not to inform the parents/guardians should be recorded briefly along with the reason for not doing so
- Where school personnel have concerns about a child, but are unsure whether to report the matter, the DLP shall seek appropriate advice, by consulting with Health Board staff. She shall be explicit that she is not making a report but is requesting advice. It would not be envisaged that the DLP would supply identifying details at this informal stage, as are required when making a report. If a Health Board advises that a referral should be made, then the DLP should act on that advice
- If, following discussions, the DLP decides that the matter should not be formally referred to the Health Board, then she should give a clear statement, in writing to the school employee, as to the reasons why action is not being taken. The school employee should be advised that if he/she remains concerned, about the situation, he/she is free to consult with or report to the Health Board again.
- It is essential that at all time these matters be treated in the strictest confidence and not discussed except among those mentioned above.

The Role of the Board of Management

The most important consideration to be taken into account by a Board of Management is the protection of children, and their safety and well-being must be a priority. However, because of the involvement of school employees, the BoM has duties in respect of them as well.

As employers, Boards of Management should note that legal advice should always be sought in these cases.

There are two procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the allegation
- The procedures for dealing with the employee

In the case of primary schools, the DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to the appropriate Health Board, while the Chairperson of the BoM, acting in consultation with his/her Board, is responsible for addressing the employment issues. However, where the allegation of abuse is against the DLP, the Chairperson of the BoM will assume responsibility for reporting the matter to the Health Board.

The primary aim of the BoM is to protect the children within the school to whom they have a duty of care. However, school employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations and therefore any threat of abuse should be dealt with sensitively, and the employee fairly treated.

Reporting Procedure

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee, the DLP within the school should immediately act in accordance with the procedures outlined in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2 of the DES Guidelines. A written statement of the allegations should be sought from the person/agency making the allegation.

School employees, other than the DLP, who receive allegations of abuse against another school employee, should report the matter without delay to the DLP as outlined in Paragraph 3.1.1 of the DES Guidelines.

School employees who form suspicions regarding the conduct of another school employee should consult with the DLP. The DLP may wish to consult with the appropriate Health Board. If the DLP the school employee are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion, the DLP should report the matter to the relevant Health Board immediately. The DLP should also report the matter to the Chairperson of the BoM.

Action to be taken by Chairperson

When a BoM Chairperson becomes aware of an allegation of abuse against a school employee, the chairperson should privately inform the employee of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her
- The nature of the allegation
- Whether or not the matter has been reported to the appropriate Health Board by the DLP

The employee should be given a copy of the written allegation and any other relevant documentation. The employee should be requested to respond to the allegation in writing to the BoM within a specified period of time. The employee should be told that his/her explanation to the BoM would also have to be passed on to the Health Board. At

this stage, it should be remembered that the first priority is to make sure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. The BoM Chairperson should as a matter of urgency take any necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children.

If, in the Chairperson's opinion, the nature of the allegations warrants immediate action, the Chairperson, on behalf of the BoM, should direct that the employee absent him/her from the school with immediate effect. When the Chairperson is unsure as to whether the nature of the allegations warrants the absence of the employee from school while the matter is being investigated, s/he should consult with the Childcare Manager of the local Health Board, and/or Garda Síochána for advice as to the action that those authorities might consider necessary. Following these consultations, the Chairperson should have due regard for the advice offered.

Any absence by a school employee would be regarded as administrative leave of absence with pay, and not a suspension. Such a leave of absence would not imply any degree of guilt on the part of the school employee. Where such leave of absence is invoked, the DES should be contacted with regard to:

1. Formal approval for the paid leave of absence of the school employee
2. Departmental sanction for the employment of a substitute teacher.

Role of Staff Member (teachers, caretakers, SNA's secretary)

It is the role of all staff members to be observant of all pupils in their care and to report any suspicion of abuse or disclosure immediately to the DLP or in her absence, the Deputy DLP

When recording any information in writing, it is vital that this is totally factual and quotes the child exactly

It is also a requirement that all matters pertaining to suspicions of abuse or actual abuse be treated with the strictest confidence. The child must only be identified by their number on the school register.

Recognition of Abuse: Child abuse can often be difficult to identify and may be present in many forms. Concerns about child protection and welfare should be shared by teachers with senior management.

There are commonly three stages in identification of child abuse:

- Consider possibility
- Look out for signs of abuse
- Record information

Consider possibility: Possibility of child abuse should be considered if a child appears to have suffered suspicious injury for which no reasonable explanation can be offered. Also if a child is distressed without obvious reason or displays persistent or new behavioural problems. Also if a child displays unusual or fearful responses to carers/parents.

Look for signs of abuse: Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or development. Pattern of signs is likely to be more indicative of abuse. Children may hint they are being harmed and may make disclosures. **Disclosures should always be believed.** Less obvious signs could be gently explored with the child without direct questioning. Play

situations and drawing may reveal information. It is important to always be open to alternative explanations for physical or behavioural signs of abuse.

Record Information: If abuse is suspected, it is important to establish ground for concern by obtaining as much detailed information as possible. Observations should be accurately recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any relevant information. They should be given to the DLP and will be stored in a secure, private area.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

- Specific indication from child that she/he was abused
- Account by person who saw child being abused
- Evidence such as injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way
- Injury or behaviour consistent with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse
- Consistent indication over period of time that child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

It is important that persons reporting suspected child abuse to a Health Board should establish basis for their concerns. A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. They should not interview a child or child's parents/carers without first consulting with the Health Board.

Impediments to Reporting of Child Abuse: Abuse is difficult and to some a distasteful subject. The belief that parents or persons in charge of children would hurt or neglect them is hard to sustain. Therefore it is easy to deny, minimise or explain away any signs that a child is being harmed even when evidence exists. At times it is hard to distinguish between abusive situations and those where other social problems are present. Sympathy for families in difficult circumstance can sometimes dilute personal or professional concerns about safety and welfare of children.

Reluctance to act on suspicions can often stem from uncertainty and fear. Professionals may be afraid of repercussions, afraid of breaking confidence, afraid of being disloyal, afraid of being thought insensitive.

It is most important that we do not let any of the above impede us in reporting child abuse. The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report reasonably and in good faith to designated officers of the Health Board or any member of An Garda Síochána.

Other Considerations

Staff Cars: As far as possible, children will be brought back to the school, and should be collected promptly by the parent at pre-arranged time. Staff will not deliver children to their homes. If a child is ill, parents will have to provide an alternative phone number for someone who will collect the child from school.

Special Needs: The Stay Safe Programme will be taught each year. Where there are children with limited academic ability, the content and activities of the lesson will be differentiated to help them to understand the message of the lesson.

Supervision: During breaks, all pupils are supervised by teachers in the school yard. To access toilets in the classroom, children must have permission of the supervising teacher. A buzzer system to admit visitors is in operation on the front door. It is

proposed to lock back doors during class for security. Parents must sign a notebook if a child's being removed from the premises during the school day.

Mass servers: Children who are serving mass during the school day will walk to and return from the church in pairs. If a rostered child is absent, then a replacement server is appointed and the two go to the church together.

Peer Abuse

Where there are allegations or suspicions of peer abuse, the DLP will follow the same procedures:

- Parents of all parties will be notified and the DLP will inform the BoM Chairperson
- Principal and class teachers will make arrangements to meet separately with all parents, to resolve the matter
- The school will make arrangements to minimise the possibility of the abusive behaviour recurring

Bullying: Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying policy. If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive then the matter will be referred to the DLP.

Implementation and Review

The guidelines outlined in this policy are implemented with immediate effect and will be reviewed on an annual basis, following the check-list for review as outlined in Circular 2011. The school shall put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review. The BoM shall make arrangements to inform school personnel that the review has been undertaken. Written notification, that the review has been undertaken shall be provided to the Parents' association.

Signed : _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix 1: Recognising Abuse

There are four categories of child abuse:

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

Definitions

Neglect: Neglect is 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 and affection from adults, medical care.

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Significance is determined by health and development of child as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his/her well-being or development is severely affected.

Emotional Abuse: This is normally found in a relationship between care-giver and child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs. Examples

- Imposition of negative attributes on children
- Conditional parenting – level of care shown is dependant on child's behaviour
- Emotional unavailability of carer/parent
- Inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of child
- Premature imposition of responsibility on child
- Under or over protection of child
- Failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for child's cognitive and emotional development
- Use of unreasonable or over harsh disciplinary measures
- Exposure to domestic violence

It can be manifested in terms of child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning – anxiousness, unhappiness, low self esteem, underachievement. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of relationship between child and parent/carer.

Physical Abuse: Any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples:

- Shaking
- Poisoning
- Excessive force in handling
- Suffocation
- Allowing risk of significant harm
- Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy i.e. fabricating stories about child's illness – secretly administering dangerous drugs.

Sexual Abuse: Occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Examples:

- Exposure of sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in presence of child
- Intentional touching or molesting of body of child for purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in presence of child or involvement of child in act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse (oral, vaginal, anal) with child
- Sexual exploitation of child. As well as requiring or permitting a child to engage in prostitution or other sexual acts, or pose for purpose of sexual arousal this also includes showing sexually explicit material to children. Child pornography
- Consensual sexual activity involving adult and under age person i.e. under 17
- Non-contact sex abuse Offensive sexual remarks, obscene phone calls

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Neglect

- Abandonment or desertion
- Persistently being left alone without adequate care or supervision
- Malnourishment – lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding
- Lack of warmth
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger including moral danger
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Failure to thrive not alone due to malnutrition but also due to emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for child's medical problems
- Exploited, overworked

Note: Distinction can be made between wilful and circumstantial neglect. Wilful neglect generally is deliberate deprivation of child's most basic needs while circumstantial neglect may be due to stress/inability to cope by carer/parent. Neglect is closely correlated with low socio-economic factors and corresponding physical deprivations and is also related to parent incapacity due to learning disability or psychological disturbance.

Emotional Abuse: Can be defined in reference to following indices. No one indicator is conclusive to emotional abuse.

- Rejection
- Lack of praise and encouragement
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation
- Lack of continuity of care
- Serious over protectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment
- Family conflicts or violence
- Every child who is abused sexually, physically or neglected is emotionally abused
- Inappropriate expectations of child's behaviour

Physical Abuse

- Bruises*
- Fractures
- Swollen joints
- Burns/scalds *
- Abrasions/lacerations
- Haemorrhages
- Damage to body organs
- Poisonings
- Failure to thrive
- Coma/unconsciousness
- Death
- *More detail on these on page 127-128 Children First

Sexual Abuse: Rarely involves one incident and usually occurs over number of years. Cases usually come to light through disclosure by child or siblings/friends, suspicions of an adult, due to physical symptoms. Physical signs may not be evident due to nature of abuse and fact that disclosure was made some time after abuse took place.

Physical and behavioural signs

- Bleeding from vagina/anus
- Difficulty/pain in passing urine/faeces
- Infection, vaginal discharge, warts/rash in genital area
- Noticeable and uncharacteristic change of behaviour
- Hints about sexual activity
- Age inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour
- Inappropriate seductive behaviour
- Sexually aggressive behaviour with others
- Uncharacteristic sexual play with peers/toys
- Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities which involve undressing – games/swimming

Particular signs in young children (0-10)

- Mood change
- Lack of concentration - change in school performance
- Bed wetting/soiling
- Psychosomatic complaints: pains, headaches
- Skin disorders
- Nightmares, change in sleep pattern
- School refusal
- Separation anxiety
- Loss of appetite
- Isolation

Particular signs in older children (10+)

- Mood change
- Running away
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Self mutilation
- Suicide attempts
- Delinquency
- Truancy
- Eating disorders
- Isolation

All signs need careful assessment to child's circumstances.

Appendix 2: How to Handle Disclosures from a Pupil

An abused child is likely to be under severe emotional stress and a staff member may be the only adult whom the child is prepared to trust. Great care should be taken not to damage that trust.

Staff members need to respond to disclosure using tact and sensitivity. Need to reassure child, retain trust while explaining need for action and possible consequences. It is important to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g. not to tell anyone.

The following action should be taken:

- Listen to the child
- Don't ask leading questions nor make suggestions to child
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises
- Don't stop a child recalling significant events
- Don't over react
- Explain that further help may have to be sought
- Record discussion accurately and retain the record
- Report information to DLP
- Give record of discussion to DLP who should retain this
- It is very important that staff notes carefully what they saw and when. Any comment by a child of how an injury occurred should be recorded. All records so created should be regarded as highly confidential and retained in a secure location by the DLP.

Appendix 3: Child Protection Meetings/Case Conferences

The child protection conference is an essential mechanism in health boards in the effective operation of the child protection services under the Child Care Act 1991. It is a forum for the co-ordination of information from all relevant sources including where necessary school employees. The child protection conference plays a pivotal role in making recommendations and planning for the welfare of children who may be at serious risk.

The procedure undertaken should a staff member be requested to attend care conferences are as follows:

- A child request will be made by the Health Board for a school employee to attend a child protection conference to the DLP
- Board of Management Chairperson may through the DLP request appropriate authorities to clarify why the attendance of the school employee at the child protection conference is necessary and who else will be present
- Substitute costs will be met by the DES in respect of teachers attending during school hours. A letter from the health board confirming attendance of teacher to be submitted to DES together with application for payment
- The person attending a child protection conference should provide a report to the conference on a form provided by the Health Board. Different health boards may have different reports
- The professional, according to Children First Guidelines, should always be informed when children and/or parents/guardians are going to be present at child protection conferences. Any school personnel who may have a concern about parent/guardian involvement should contact chairperson of child protection conference in advance for guidance
- The conference may recommend that agencies provide resources and services to the family. Participants may provide undertakings regarding actions that they agree to take. Recommendations may include the board taking legal advice with respect to an application for a Court Order to protect the child
- The school employee may be requested to keep the child's behaviour under closer observation, in a manner that is not inconsistent with the school employee's existing duties to his/her class as a whole. This may include observing a child's behaviour in terms of peer interactions, school progress, informal conversation
- In all cases, individuals who refer or discuss their concerns about the care and protection of children with Health Board staff should be informed of the steps to be taken by the professionals involved. Wherever appropriate and within the limits of confidentiality, Health Board staff have a responsibility to inform persons reporting the alleged child abuse and other professionals about the outcomes of any enquiry or investigation into that reported concern.

Roles and Responsibilities of Child Protection Participants

Notwithstanding the pivotal role of the chairperson, the quality and effectiveness of a child protection conference will depend on the willingness and commitment of all participants, particularly with regard to the following factors:

- Adequate preparation
- Provision of written reports which cover information about the child and parents/carers, past and present concerns, own current involvement and factually based assessment of the current situation and recommendations
- Open mindedness and willingness to constructively debate conflicting views, always keeping the welfare of the child paramount
- Respect for the contribution of all participants, irrespective of status or previous disagreement

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- Sensitivity to the feeling of the family members present
- Acceptance of individual responsibilities and tasks and commitment to carry them out.

APPENDIX A

Child Protection Practices

The staff and BoM of this school have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to Child Protection. Following discussion and consultation, the staff and BoM have agreed that the following practices be adopted:

- Physical contact between school personnel and the child should always be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult.

While physical contact may be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child, the following should be factors in determining its appropriateness:

- It is acceptable to the child
- It is open and not secretive
- The age and developmental stage of the child

School personnel should avoid doing anything of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

School personnel should never engage in or allow:

- The use of inappropriate language or behaviours
- Physical punishment of any kind
- Sexually provocative games or suggestive comments about or to a child
- The use of sexually explicit or pornographic material

All media products (CDs, DVDs etc. should be checked for their appropriateness with regard to age and suitability.

Visitors/Guest Speakers

Vetted guest speakers and visiting teachers of varying disciplines, employed by the BoM of Ramsgrange NS to perform specific duties, will be left work with a class alone at the Principal's discretion

Visitors/Guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The school (principal/teachers) has a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use is appropriate.

Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs

- In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting/intimate care, a meeting will be convened, after enrolment and before the child starts school, between parents/guardians, class teacher, special needs assistant, Principal and if appropriate the pupil. The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain the specific needs of the child and to determine how the school can best meet those needs
- The staff to be involved in this care will be identified and provision will be made for occasions when the particular staff involved are absent. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file
- Two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care/toileting needs. Any deviation from the agreed procedure will be recorded and notified to the DLP and the parents/guardians.

Toileting accidents

Clean underwear and suitable clothing will be kept in the school so that if a pupil has an 'accident' of this nature, they will in the first instance be offered fresh clothing into which they can change.

If the pupil for whatever reason cannot clean or change themselves and the parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the child will be assisted by members of staff familiar to the child. In all such situations, two members of staff should be present. A record of all such incidents will be kept and Principal and parents will be notified.

Accidents

While every precaution will be taken under our Health and Safety Statement to ensure the safety of children, we realise that accidents will happen. Accidents will be noted in our Incident book and will be addressed under our Accident Policy as part of Health and Safety.

On-to-one teaching

- It is the policy in this school that one-to-one teaching is often in the best interest of the child
- Every effort will be made to ensure that this teaching takes place in an open environment
- Parents of children who are to be involved in one-to-one teaching will be informed and their agreement sought
- Work being carried out by Special Needs Assistants will be carried out under the direction of the class teacher in an open environment.

Changing for games/ PE / Swimming

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for Games/ PE/ Swimming. Where assistance is needed this will be done in the communal area and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/ volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required, the parents/guardians of the child will be asked to assist the child. Ramsgrange NS will endeavour to have two male volunteers/member of staff in the male changing area and two female members of staff/ volunteers in the female changing area.

The BoM of Ramsgrange NS has requested that all swimming volunteers apply to be vetted for 2011 -2012 school year. In the interim, a Volunteer Form approved by the CPSMA will be in use. At all times there must be adequate supervision of pupils. While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable, a full record of the incident should be made and reported to the Principal and parents.

Attendance

Our school attendance will be monitored as per our attendance policy. With regards to child protection, we will pay particular attention to trends in non-attendance. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse.

Behaviour

Children are encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

Bullying

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying policy. If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive, then the matter will be referred to the DLP.

Children travelling in staff cars

Members of the school staff will not carry children alone in their cars at any time.

Communication

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral Language/RE programmes allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which is hoped will aid the pupil-teacher relationship. If teachers have to communicate with pupils on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open or request a colleague to attend. Further details on communications are found in the school's Communication Policy.

Induction of Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures (DES, 2001) and Children First Guidelines (1999), but particularly the recently published Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). The DLP will give a copy of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, Chapters 3 & 4 and Appendix 1 of Children First and this Child Protection Policy to all new staff. All new teachers are expected to teach the designated SPHE objectives for their class. A member of staff, once trained, will be responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives. Ramsgrange NS is responsible for ensuring that new teachers know how to fill in the roll book correctly and informing the teacher of record keeping procedures within the school.

Induction of Pupils

All parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). All parents will be informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development e.g. RSE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe and SPHE. All new parents will be given a copy of the school's enrolment policy, which outlines the procedures parents and children should use when contacting the school if there are absences or concerns of an educational/personal/family matter. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress. All parents will be given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

Internet Safety

It is the intention of the Principal and Staff at Ramsgrange NS to ensure that child protection concerns will be addressed in the school's Acceptable Use Policy as part of its Information and Communication Technology policy. The Stay Safe lessons in each classroom will be supplemented with a lesson from the Webwise resource pack recently made available to schools. We hope to hold annual meetings during which parents will be invited to attend a session with an invited speaker to stay abreast of the ever-changing situation regarding internet access.

Record Keeping

Teachers will keep records on each child's reports using Ramsgrange NS Record Keeping Sheets. These records are kept in the drawer of each teacher's desk. 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 this school are kept in the filing cabinet in the office. Further details on record keeping will be found in the school's Record Keeping Policy.

Supervision

The school's supervision policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks. A rota will be displayed to cover 11 o'clock and lunchtime breaks. See Supervision Policy for agreed rules around break-times and procedures around teacher absences.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school playground. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or sheds where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the school playground or to engage with adults who are outside of the school playground.

Appendix B

Reporting Form for Child Protection and Welfare Concerns to a Health Board

1. Date of Report
2. Name of person reporting
3. Address of person reporting
4. Relationship of reporting person with the child concerned
5. Method of report (telephone call, personal call to office)
6. Family Details

Details of Child Concerned

Surname
Forename
DOB
Male/female
Alias (known as)
Address:

Correspondence address (if different)

Telephone number

7. State whether you consider your report to indicate (a) suspected or actual child abuse or (b) need for family support, giving reasons

	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Neglect
Suspect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Details of other family members/household members

Name	Age	Relationship to child	Employment/School	Location

In cases of emergency, or outside Health Board hours, reports should be made to An Garda Síochána.

9. Name of Other Professionals Involved with Child/ren and/or Parents/Carers.

Public health nurse:

School:

General practitioner:

Any other agency or professional involved (please describe the nature of any involvement):

Report Details.

10. Describe, as fully as possible the nature of the problem or incident being reported, giving details of times and dates of individual incidents, the circumstances in which they occurred, any other persons who were present at the time, and their involvement

11. Has any explanation been offered by the child, and/or parents/carers, which would account for the current problem or incident? (Details)

12. As far as possible, describe the state of the child/ren's physical, mental and emotional well-being.

13. If child abuse is being alleged, who is believed to be responsible for causing it?

Include (if known)

Name:

Address:

Degree of contact with child:

Degree of contact with other children:

14. Describe (in detail) any risks to which the child/ren in this situation is/are believed to be exposed.

15. How did this information come to your attention

16. What has prompted you to report your concern at this time?

17. What evidence of harm exists at present?

18. Are there any factors in the child and/or parents/carers' present situation, which may have relevance to the current concern? (for example, recent illness, bereavement, separation, addiction, mental health problem or other difficulty)

19. Are there any factors in the child and/or parents/carers' situation which could be considered protective or helpful (for example, extended family or community support)?

20. Has any action been taken in response to the current concern or incident (Details)

21. Are the child's parents/ carers aware that this concern is being reported to the health board?

22. Is there a need for urgent protective action at this point?

23. Any other comments.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In recent years, as a society, we have become very aware of the problem of child abuse through neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Each one of us has a duty to protect children and Children First, the National Guidelines, for the Protection and Welfare of Children noted that teachers, who are the main care givers to children outside the family, are particularly well placed to observe and monitor children for signs of abuse.

In response to this, the Department of Education and Skills published Guidelines and Procedures for all schools in relation to child protection and welfare. These guidelines promote the safety and welfare of all children and are to be welcomed.

The Board of Management of Ramsgrange NS has adopted these guidelines as school policy. Consequently, if school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child abuse, they are obliged to refer this matter to the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

Children First, the National Guidelines for the Protection of Children may be assessed on the website of the Department of Health and Children (www.dohc.ie) and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Guidelines can be read on the Department's website (www.education.ie). Parents/Guardians are also welcome to look through the guidelines here at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lorraine Cooper
Principal

Child Protection Contacts

Designated Liaison Person

Mrs Lorraine Cooper

Deputy DLP

Mrs Ciara Morrissey

Garda Station

Telephone:

051 389102 (Duncannon)

051 388103 (Campile)

051 421204 (New Ross)

Local Contact For

'The Children and Family Social Services of the HSE'

TELEPHONE:

053 9123522

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF RAMSGRANGE NATIONAL SCHOOL

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 Ramsgrange National School 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

Lorraine Cooper

3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is

Ciara Morrissey

4. In its policies, practices and activities, Ramsgrange National School 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 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. This section of the child protection policy should be used to list school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection (e.g. the Code of Behaviour/Anti-bullying Policy, Pupil Attendance Strategy, Supervision of Pupils, Sporting Activities/School Outings/Pupil Work Placements at post primary etc.

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices 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 (if any) 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.

Appendix 1: Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of its Child Protection Policy and the following checklist shall be used for this purpose.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. The BoM may wish to include other items in the checklist that are of particular relevance to Ramsgrange NS and reserves the right to do so if/when the need occurs.

1.	As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess other school policies, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the school's Child Protection policy	YES	NO
2.	Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
3.	As part of the school's child protection policy, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
4.	Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	YES	NO
5.	Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	YES	NO
6.	Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	YES	NO
7.	Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	YES	NO
8.	Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	YES	NO
9.	Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?	YES	NO
10.	Has the Board ensured that the Department's "Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools" are available to all school personnel?	YES	NO

11.	Does the Board have arrangements in place to communicate the school's child protection policy to new school personnel?	YES	NO
12.	Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
13.	Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made to the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP?	YES	NO
14.	Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made?	YES	NO
15.	Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/ An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed?	YES	NO
16.	Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	YES	NO
17.	Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	YES	NO
18.	Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	YES	NO

