



Child Protection Policy Corpus Christi Primary School

This document is formulated in response to national guidance and procedures, in relation to Child Protection Matters and takes account of the provisions of each of the following important pieces of legislation:

- Freedom of Information Act 1997.
- The Education Act 1998.
- The Child Welfare Act 2000.
- Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.

Procedures are based on Children First - National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.

References:

Children First (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011).

Child Protection Procedures for primary and Post Primary Schools (Department of Education and Skills Circular 0065/2011).

The Board of Management (BoM) recognises that child protection and welfare considerations, permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in each school policy, school 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 BoM of Corpus Christi Primary School has approved this Child Protection Policy.

The BoM has adopted and will fully implement without modification, the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2011. These procedures underpin the content of this policy.

The following key personnel have been identified and ratified by the BoM

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) Ms. Hilary McAlea

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) Ms. Orflaith Prendergast

In its policies practices and activities, Corpus Christi Primary School will adhere to the following principles of best practice in Child Protection and Welfare. Corpus Christi Primary School recognises that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations and will therefore

- Fully co-operate with 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.
- 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.
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
- Adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult or pupil with a special vulnerability.

Specific policies named hereunder are key elements of this overall document and must be referred to in the context of this policy:

- Attendance.
- Enrolment.
- Code of Behaviour.
- Anti Bullying.
- Health and Safety.
- Record Keeping.
- ICT.
- Supervision.
- Special Education.
- Induction of Staff.
- Tours/Trips.
- Critical Incidents.

The policy will also be considered with reference to the participation by pupils in sporting activities, extra curricular activities and school outings. Other practices and activities where child protection might have particular relevance, will consider the procedures outlined within this policy. The BoM has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate, are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

This policy is available to all school personnel and the Parent Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. It is also available in hard copy in each classroom. A copy of this policy is available for the attention of the DES and the Patron if requested.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

In Corpus Christi Primary School, the Principal Tiernan O Neill, appointed by the BoM is the DLP and Ms. Hilary McAlea, the Deputy Principal acts as the Deputy DLP. The DLP has specific responsibility for Child Protection Procedures and will represent the school in all correspondence with Tusla, an Garda Síochána and other parties in connection with allegations of abuse. All matters pertaining to child abuse concerns should be processed through the DLP (DES procedures 3:2)

The DLP acts appropriately where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion, or where an allegation has been made.

Confidentiality

In the interests of the child, all information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. The giving of information to those who need to have that information is not a breach of confidentiality. This procedure exists for the protection of a child, who may have been or has been abused. The DLP who is submitting a report to Tusla, or the Garda Síochána should inform the 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 reason for not doing so.

In emergency situations where Tusla cannot be contacted, and the child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, the Garda Síochána should be contacted. A child should not be left in a dangerous situation, where Tusla intervention is not forthcoming.

Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse

The protection for persons reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, provides immunity from civil liability to any person who reports a child protection concern 'reasonably and in good faith' to

designated officers of Tusla, or any member of the Garda Síochána (DES Procedures 1:10).

Qualified Privilege

People making a report to the DLP in good faith, have 'qualified privilege' under common law. Reports made to Tusla may be subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1997. This act 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 (DES Procedures 1:11).

Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

- Neglect.
- Emotional abuse.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.

Each of these categories is defined in full in 'Children First' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs Chapter2).

Neglect can be defined in terms of 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 and affection from adults and medical care.

Guidelines for Recognition of Child Abuse

A list of child neglect indicators is contained in Chapter 2:2 of Children First. This policy draws particular attention to 'persistent evidence' of neglect, including indicators, such as no lunch, lack of school uniform, no homework, poor attendance, persistent health problems, lack of sleep indicating inappropriate television viewing, playing consoles late at night and other evidence that would indicate lack of supervision in the home. All signs and symptoms must be examined in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances.

There are commonly three stages in the indication of child abuse:

1. Considering the possibility.
2. Looking out for signs of abuse.
3. Recording of information.

Each of these stages is developed in 'Children First' (2:2).

Handling Disclosures from Children

(DES Procedures 3:5) gives comprehensive details of how disclosures should be approached. Members of staff are advised to deal with each situation sensitively, reassure the child, but not to make promises that cannot be fulfilled.

The adult should not ask leading questions or make suggestions. They should explain that further help might have to be sought. The discussion should then be recorded accurately. The record should include reference to what was observed and details of physical injury where necessary. It should also record, when the alleged incident took place. Records should be kept in a secure place. The information should then be conveyed to the DLP. If the reporting person and the DLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for suspicion/allegation, the procedure outlined in 'Children First' must be adhered to. Standardised reporting forms should be used (DES Procedures Appendix4). The content of the report should follow the guidelines in 'Children First'.

Allegations or Suspicions in relation to School Employees (DES Procedures Chapter 5)

The Chairperson and the DLP are concerned with the protection of the children in their care, in the first instance. However, employees must be protected against false and malicious claims. Due

process will be observed in relation to allegations against employees. Legal Advice will be sought by the BoM in relation to an allegation made in relation to an employee. If the allegation is against the DLP, the BoM Chairperson will assume responsibility for reporting the matter to the HSE.

Reporting

When an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee, the DLP should act in accordance with procedures outlined in Children First. A written statement of the allegation should be sought from the person/agency making the report. A parent/guardian may make a statement on behalf of a child. The DLP is responsible for liaising with Tusla and informing the Chairperson of the BoM. The Chairperson assumes responsibility for dealing with employees. School employees other than the DLP who receive allegations against another school employee, should immediately report the matter to the DLP. School employees who form suspicions regarding the conduct of another employee, should consult with the DLP.

The employee should be informed by the Chairperson (Employer) that

- a) An allegation has been made against him/her.
- b) The nature of the allegation.
- c) Whether or not Tusla or the Gardaí has been informed.

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 specific period and told that this may be passed to the Gardaí, Tusla and legal advisors.

The Chairperson must take the necessary steps to protect the child and may consult the BoM in the matter. The BoM may direct the employee to take administrative leave with pay and avoid suspension, thus removing any implications of guilt. The Des should be informed immediately.

School Measures to Protect the Children in Our Care

There are a number of areas where common sense in our school will prevail, in order to protect the children in the school and the staff who care for them. In relation to this, certain points should be noted:

- 1) Corpus Christi Primary School will fully implement the Stay Safe Programme.
- 2) A copy of the school's Child Protection Policy, which includes the names of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy DLP will be made available to all school personnel and the Parent's Association and is readily accessible to parents on request.
- 3) The name of the DLP, the Deputy DLP and other relevant support services are displayed in a prominent position near the main entrance to the school.
- 4) In addition to informing the BoM of those cases, where a report involving a child in the school has been submitted to Tusla, the DLP will also inform the BoM of cases where the DLP sought advice from Tusla and as a result of this advice, no report was made. At each BoM meeting, the Principal's report will include the number of all such cases and this will be recorded in the minutes of the BoM Meeting.
- 5) Corpus Christi Primary School will undertake an annual review of the Child Protection Policy and its implementation by the school. A checklist will be used in undertaking the review (Appendix 1). The school will put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement, which might be identified in the annual review. The BoM shall make arrangements to inform the school personnel that the review has been undertaken. The Parent's Association will be informed that the review has been undertaken. A record of the review and its outcomes shall be made available if requested, to the Patron and the DES.

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 the following practices be adopted.

School personnel should avoid doing anything of a personnel 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 the child.
- The use of sexually explicit or pornographic material.

All media products (cds, dvds, you tube, internet etc.) should be checked for their appropriateness, with regard to age and suitability.

Physical Contact

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:

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

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 the Accident notebook and will be addressed under the Accident Policy as part of Health and Safety. The child will be cared for and First Aid will be administered, if deemed necessary.

One-to-one teaching

It is the policy of this school that one-to-one teaching can sometimes be in the best interest of the child. Every effort is made to ensure that teaching takes place in an open environment. Parents of children who are involved in one-to-one teaching are informed and their agreement sought. It is school policy that staff in one-to-one teaching situations are visible at all times. A clear glass panel or an open door will render the occupants visible at all times. Work being carried out by the Special Needs Assistant is 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, with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/volunteers be expected to or allowed dress/undress a child unsupervised in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required, the parents/guardians of the child will be asked for permission to assist the child.

Assistance in toileting/intimate care needs

In all situations where a pupil needs continued assistance with toileting/intimate care, a meeting will be convened after enrolment and before the child starts school, between the parents/guardians, class teacher, special needs assistant, Principal and where appropriate the child. 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 members of staff involved are absent. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file.

Clean underwear and clothes 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 him or herself, the parent/guardian will be contacted. If the parent/guardians cannot be contacted, the child will be assisted by members of staff, familiar to the child. In such situations, two members of staff will be present. A record of such incidents will be kept and the Principal and parents will be notified.

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.

Children with disabilities

It should be noted that children with disabilities might be more at risk of abuse, due to a number of reasons (DES Procedures 2:3). Parents, teachers and all staff involved in services for children with disabilities, need to be familiar with the indicators of abuse and to be alert for signs of abuse.

Visitors/Guest Speakers

Appropriately appointed and vetted visiting teachers of varying disciplines engaged by the BoM of Corpus Christi Primary School to perform specific duties, will be left work alone with a class at the Principal's discretion.

Visitors/Guest speakers are never left alone with pupils. The Principal has a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure the material in use is appropriate.

Attendance

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

Behaviour

Bullying behaviour is 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. All parents are given a copy of the school Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policies.

Children travelling in staff cars

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

Communication

Every effort is made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns, they are listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral Language/RE programmes etc. and ethos of the school allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which enhances pupil-teacher communication. 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 be present.

Induction of Staff

The DLP is responsible for ensuring all new teachers and ancillary staff are informed about Child Protection Procedures (DES, 2011) and Children First Guidelines (2011), but particularly Children First – National Guidelines for the protection and Welfare of Children (2011). All new teachers are expected to teach the appropriate SPHE programme for their class. A member of

staff is responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and is responsible for supporting new teachers, as they implement the SPHE programme.

Induction of Pupils

All parents and children are made aware of attendance rules and their implications, as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). All parents are informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development eg. RSE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe and SPHE. All new parents are 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.

Internet Safety

It is the intention of the Principal and the staff of Corpus Christi Primary School to ensure that child protection concerns are addressed, as part of the Information and Communication Technology Policy. Stay Safe lessons in each class may be supplemented with appropriate resources.

Record Keeping

All class teachers complete end of year reports. A copy of the report is given to the parents/guardians. School copies of the reports are stored on the school database, which is password protected. Educational Files of pupils are kept in a secure location. Professional reports are kept securely in a locked filing cabinet. Attendance is monitored and updated daily. Records of attendance are stored on the school database, which is password protected. Sensitive information regarding children will be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Supervision

There is comprehensive supervision of children at all times. Staff members are advised on a regular basis of the importance of this. A staff supervision rota is displayed to cover break time and lunchtime breaks. On wet days, children remain in their classes and a teacher supervises a number of classes. There is a pairing system to ensure supervision takes place, when a teacher is absent. If a teacher has to leave their classroom, the teacher opposite is informed and both doors are left open, to allow for supervision of both classes.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure children are visible in the school playground. Children are not allowed spend time in the classroom, 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 1

Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management of Corpus Christi Primary School must undertake an annual review of its Child Protection Policy and the following checklist is used for this purpose.

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

1	As part of the overall review process, the Board of Management should also assess other school policies, practices and activities with regard 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 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 (Tusla and an Gardaí) 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 and 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 TUSLA/Gardaí by the DLP?	Yes	No
14	Since the Board's last review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from TUSLA and as a result of this advice, no report to TUSLA was made?	Yes	No
15	Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to TUSLA/Gardaí were appropriately followed?	Yes	No
16	Were the 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 Parent's Association has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	Yes	No

Ratification of the Child Protection Policy of Corpus Christi Primary School

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.



Dear Parent/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 in the main care of 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 procedures for all schools in relation to child protection and welfare. These guidelines promote the safety and welfare of children and are welcomed.

The Board of Management of Corpus Christi Primary School has adopted these guidelines as school policy. Consequently, if school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child abuse, they are obliged to refer the matter to Tusla - Children and Family Agency. Tusla will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

Children First, the National Guidelines for the Protection of Children may be accessed on the website of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (www.dcyia.ie) and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures, can be read on the Departments website (www.education.ie). Parents/Guardians are also welcome to look through the guidelines here at the school.

Corpus Christi Child Safeguarding Statement is available at the school. As a school, we recognise the importance of child protection and this is reflected in every school policy, school practices and school activities.

One-to-one teaching can sometimes be in the best interest of the child. Every effort is made to ensure that teaching takes place in an open environment. It is school policy that staff in one-to-one teaching situations, should be visible at all times. Many programmes such as Incredible Years, Walk Tall, Stay Safe, RSE, SPHE are taught in the school to promote the wellbeing, confidence and resilience of our pupils. Parents are very welcome to talk to the teachers and look at these programmes.

Yours sincerely

Hilary McAlae
Principal

Corpus Christi Primary School

Child Protection Contacts

Designated Liaison Person

Hilary McAlae

Deputy DLP

Orfhlaith Prendergast

Garda Station

Telephone: Mayorstone Garda Station

061 456980

Local Contact for

Tusla Children and Family Agency

Telephone:061 457100

Address: Social Work Department,
Ballynanty Health Centre,
Kileely Road,
Ballynanty Beg,
Limerick.