



ROSCOMMON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
20th September 2023

APPROVED BY GALWAY & ROSCOMMON EDUCATION &
TRAINING BOARD (GRETb)

THIS POLICY HAS BEEN PREPARED IN CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS, STUDENTS, STAFF, THE
BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND GRETb

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Management of Roscommon Community College has adopted the Department of Education and Science Guidelines and Procedures in relation to Child Protection and Welfare. These new procedures have come about arising from the enactment of the Children First Act 2015. The Act places statutory obligations on specific groups of professionals, including registered teachers and on organisations such as schools. The requirements of the new procedures came into effect on 11th December 2017.

This policy clarifies how our school proposes to implement these guidelines and procedures in order to ensure the protection and welfare of all students attending our 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 Roscommon Community College has agreed the following child protection policy:

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.

LINK TO MISSION STATEMENT

We aim to protect the wellbeing of students by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Schools which have a good network of relationships, where there is a concern for the whole person throughout the life of the school, will be in a better position to respond child protection and or welfare concerns.

The staff, parents and management of Roscommon Community College have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child protection guidelines.

This policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the followings areas: -

- Awareness- curriculum provision and staff training
- Procedures- procedures for dealing with concerns / disclosures
- Practice- organisational implications Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment (Appendix E)

An individual copy of this policy document and the appended section from the Department of Education and Science Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures will be made available to all staff.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with 'Children First' and the DES child protection guidelines and procedures.

AIMS

In its policies, practices and activities, Roscommon Community College 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

AWARENESS

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is timetabled as part of the junior cycle core curriculum. SPHE provides students with opportunities to develop the skills and competencies to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. In particular, the module on Personal Safety focuses on the development of personal awareness and skills for self-protection – protection from assault or attack and protection from harassment or abusive behaviour. The module also deals with how to get help in the event of a threat or an assault, or even an anxiety about someone's behaviour or attitude. SPHE plays an important role in helping students recognise situations in which their personal safety might be threatened as well as providing them with the knowledge and skills to deal with unsafe, threatening or abusive situations.

Awareness and education also occurs during regular assemblies, counselling sessions and through invited speakers for students, parents and teachers.

All teachers have received training on the Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools and the Children First Guidelines.

TRAINING

- Training for staff has and will occur through the PDST online E-Learning platforms in conjunction with TUSLA for all staff in addition the DLP and DDLP also undertake training as provided by the PDST and TUSLA
- The BOM are and will also be provided with training on an ongoing basis.
- A record of training by each staff member is maintained in the school office and in the staff handbook and in the BOM handbook

Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the SPHE Programme are reinforced whenever possible.

PROCEDURES

All staff (Teachers, SNAs, ancillary, secretarial, caretaking etc.) in this school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in 'Children First' and the Department of Education and Science document, 'Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures'.

All staff has been issued with a copy of the 'Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures' and have received appropriate training. All parents will be informed of our Guidelines and procedures which will be displayed on the school website and also given to the parents' association.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Georgina Keena, Principal

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Jude Lohan, Deputy Principal

The name of the DLP and deputy DLP are displayed outside the school office door.

CHILD PROTECTION OVERSIGHT REPORT (CPOR)

From 11th December 2017 the principal shall provide at every Board meeting a Child Protection Oversight Report, covering the following from the previous board meeting

- (1) The Number of Allegations of abuse made against members of school personnel (The names of personnel will be made to the Chief Executive of the ETB rather to the BOM)
- (2) The Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from TUSLA in relation to an allegation of abuse against a member of school personnel and the matter
- (3) The Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from TUSLA in relation to an allegation of abuse against a member of school personnel and the matter was not reported by the DLP based on the advice of Tusla,
- (4) state the number of cases where an allegation of abuse has been made against a member of school personnel and the DLP has not sought any advice from Tusla in relation to the matter and has not been reported the matter to Tusla, and
- (5) state the number of cases where an allegation of abuse has been made against a member of school personnel and the DLP did not report the matter to Tusla in circumstances where Tusla has advised the DLP that it should be reported.
- (6) where there were no such cases at 1-5 above, state this fact.
- (7) Other child protection concerns in respect of pupils in the school (*i.e.* concerns that do not involve any allegation of abuse against a member of school personnel)
- (8) Child protection concerns arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils and
- (9) Summary data in respect of reporting to TUSLA

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT (Attached)

- 1) Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment
- 2) Child Safeguarding Statement

1) The Board of Management has a statutory obligation to carry out a risk assessment of any potential harm to children while they are attending school or participating in school activities.

List:

- all school activities
- the risk identified with these activities
- put in place procedures to address these risks

2) The Board of Management has a statutory obligation to compile a Child Safeguarding Statement. This Statement must be:

- on display in a prominent place close to the main entrance of the school along with the name of the DLP
- provided to all school personnel
- available to parents
- provided to trustees(GRETB)
- provided to Parents Association
- published on school website
- available to the DES and members of the public on request

The staff and management of this school have agreed:

- All concerns/ disclosures involving child protection/child welfare issues will be reported in the first instance to the DLP (deputy DLP where appropriate)
- Each report to the DLP will be dated and signed by the person making that report
- A strict adherence to maintaining confidentiality – information regarding concerns or disclosures of abuse should only be given on a ‘need to know’ basis.
- A copy of the report will be made available to the school authority, namely the CE of GRETB should they so request copies of the reports, these reports will be marked private and confidential and is for the CE’s information only.
The DLP will also inform the school authority of cases where the DLP 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 make a Child Protection Oversight Report.

NB: The protocol authorising immediate action under section 5.2 of the Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools is a function of the Chief Executive of GRETB, Mr. David Leahy

MANDATED PERSONS

The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on teachers to report child protection concerns at or above the defined threshold to Tusla – Child and Family Agency.

Mandated persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015. These are:

1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern, which has been the subject of a mandated report.

As a mandated person, under the legislation teachers are required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed. The Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse, and covers single and multiple instances.

The four types of abuse are described in Chapter 2 of “Children First- National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children” as is the threshold of harm at which the mandated persons have a **legal** obligation to report concerns.

As a mandated person if teachers receive a disclosure of harm from a child they will deal with the disclosure sensitively and professionally. The following approach is suggested as best practice for dealing with these disclosures.

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible
- Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of the Children’s First Guidance and legislation

If it is felt urgent intervention may be required to make the child safe, we will alert Tusla of the concern in advance of submitting a written report.

Mandated persons/DLP/DDLP will submit a Child Protection and Welfare Report Form to Tusla on the report form or via the web portal within three days.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY

The implementation, monitoring and review of this policy will be done by senior management in conjunction with the staff, parents and the board of management on an annual basis. A checklist to be used in undertaking the review is included at **Appendix C**. The school must put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review. The Board of Management 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 (or where none exists directly to parents). A record of the review and its outcome shall be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 20th September 2023

Signed: Cllr Kathleen Shanagher
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 20th September 2023

Date of next review: 20th September 2024

Appendix A

Key contacts for Child Protection Policy

HSE West

Area Social Work Manager

091-546366

Duty social worker Fax

091-527601

Roscommon Garda Station

090-6638300

Appendix B

Guidance Notes for Child protection Case Conferences and Reports

The child's personal details –

- name, date of birth, address, school and class.

Academic performance – to include

- level of attainment
- changes noticed in academic performance
- strengths, weaknesses and achievements
- overall assessment of general performance

Behaviour – including significant changes in behaviour

- in classroom
- in social areas of the school

Social skills –

- Interactions with peers
- Interactions with adults

School issues –

- To what extent is the young person disposed to avail of what the school has to offer?
- Are you aware of any supports the young person has to sustain and support his/her interest in school (consider home, school, friends and community)?

Please comment on any concerns noted by you or your colleagues about this child, especially with regard to injuries, bruising, sexually inappropriate behaviour...etc.

If any other children of this family are, or have been known to your school, please note any Particular concerns about these children too.

Please include any additional comments or observations.

Please print your name, sign and date any reports and include contact details of the school.

It is recommended you mark your report “strictly private and confidential” and include a line at the end to effect that “this report is written without prejudice”.