

Donabate Community College

Child Protection Policy Academic Year 2017 2018



This Child Protection Policy is to be reviewed by the Board of Management.

This Child Protection Policy was agreed on 12/09/2017

Signature Cllr. Adrian Henchy
(Chairperson to the Board of Management)

Signature Anthony Creevey
(Principal)

Date for Review 13/09/2018

Background

The Child Care Act (1991), Children's Act and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992), enshrine in law the paramount principle of the welfare of children.

They were designed to promote the welfare and protection of children (0 -18 years).

The acts cover the rights and responsibilities of parents, the protection of children in emergencies, children in care, the supervision of pre-schools and the duty of the Health Service Executive (HSE) to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection.

In 2004, "Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools", updated in 2011, was published by the Department of Health and Science and offers support and guidance to people who come into regular contact with children, and who are, therefore, in a position of responsibility in recognising and responding to possible child abuse.

Legislative Basis for policy

1. Child Care Act 1991
2. Children's Act 2001
3. Education Act 1998

4. Education and Welfare Act 2000
5. Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse 1998
6. Freedom of Information Act 1997/2003

Copies of these can be found at www.education.ie

It is the policy of our school to follow the procedures as laid down in *Children First – National Guidance for the protection and Welfare of Children 2011* in any case where we suspect or are alerted to, child abuse, including where a child discloses abuse.

This Child Protection Policy is drawn up in conjunction with these acts and guidelines. In Donabate Community College, the safety and protection of the child is of paramount importance in all situations.

Care Team

The management of Donabate Community College have in place a care team to help with the recognition and reporting of child abuse and to provide a support to children at risk of child abuse. This care team comprises:

Designated Liaison Person (DLP): Anthony Creevey (Principal)
Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP): Marian Flynn (Deputy Principal)
Wesleigh O'Hagan (Deputy Principal)
Guidance Counsellors: Michelle O'Brien; Kerrie Whelan
Year Heads
Class Tutors
Teaching Staff

Aims:

1. To raise awareness of the concept of child abuse (emotional, physical, sexual and neglect) among all school staff (including teachers, SNAs, secretary, caretaker etc)
2. To put in place clear procedures for all school personnel dealing with suspicions and allegations of child abuse.
3. To identify curricular content and resources that contribute to the prevention of child abuse and to enable children to properly deal with abuse if it occurs.
4. To promote and protect the welfare of all the pupils in our care.

Recognising Child Abuse

Donabate Community College will endeavour to protect pupils from abuse or risk of abuse. Abuse can fall under the following four headings: Neglect, Emotional Abuse, Sexual abuse and Physical Abuse. All members of staff are expected to be vigilant and report concerns immediately to the DLP, DDLDP or the Guidance Counsellor.

Donabate is a “telling” school where students are encouraged to report to staff any bullying or abuse they may be aware of. Students are also aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if it comprises the safety of a student. The safety and protection of students is a priority in all cases.

The following would merit further investigation:

- A student reports the abuse
- Another person may report seeing a student being abused
- Obvious evidence of physical injuries inconsistent with an accident
- A student showing signs of being emotionally distressed

Copies of the “Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools” can be accessed from the DLP and the DDLP and are available in the staff room and on www.education.ie

Keeping Records

Where the child abuse is suspected, staff members will make a written record of all information available. This written record will include:

1. Date and Time
2. Place where disclosure was made/concern was raised
3. Facts pertaining to the case

Where possible, the students own words should be quoted in the report. No leading questions shall be asked.

This written record will not contain any opinions or judgments and will be given to the DLP or DDLP.

No attempt will be made by any member of staff to investigate the issue other than to establish if there are grounds for concern. Where the DLP or DDLP establish there are grounds for concern, the DLP will inform the HSE immediately through the Duty Social Worker.

The parents will always be informed except where this may endanger a student further. In the event of an emergency, or where the HSE cannot be contacted, a report will be made to An Garda Síochána.

The written record will be kept confidential at all times and stored in a safe place by the DLP/DDLP to protect the student involved.

Allegations made against teachers

Where an allegation is made against a teacher or another member of staff, it will be the responsibility of the School Principal to ensure that any complaints thoroughly investigated, (protecting the rights of both the child and the employee). Where the complaint is against the Principal the CEO of County Dublin Dun Laoighaire ETB has the responsibility.

For the safety and protection of teachers, any teacher/staff member who has an allegation made against them is encouraged to contact ASTI/relevant trade union for support and advice. Teachers are also made aware of the Employee Assistance

Service, organised through the VHI, which offers a range of health Services including counselling to teachers affected by these issues.

Donabate Community College recognises the right of parents/pupils, granted under the Freedom of Information Act 1997/2003, of access to records of personal information and the right to make personal corrections where there are inaccuracies.

Donabate Community College also ensures the protection of anyone making a report of child abuse as provided under the "Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998"

This policy is not a stand-alone document but part of a whole school response to child protection. Other policies and guidelines which ensure the safety and protection of the child at all times include:

1. Code of Positive Behaviour
2. Anti-bullying policy
3. RSE Policy
4. Professional Codes and Best Practice Guidelines for Teachers as set out by Teaching Council, ASTI/TUI

Supervision:

Every effort will be made to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks and at the beginning and end of the school day. A roster of staff on duty will be drawn up and displayed in the staff room. Children are not permitted to spend break times in the classrooms unsupervised.

Visitors:

All unscheduled visitors to the school are required to check in at the office. Visitors to our school are not given unsupervised access to children.

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.

Behaviour:

Students are to be encouraged at all times to show respect for themselves and others. Our Code of Behaviour outlines what is expected of each student.

Toilets:

It is school policy that only one child is permitted to enter the toilet area at a time. Children who need to use the toilet during class time must seek the permission of a Staff member.

Intimate care agreements are in place for any child who requires assistance with toileting. If any child in our school requires intimate care the procedures involved in

such care will be agreed in consultation with the pupil, their parents/guardians and any other personnel involved in the care of the pupil, in keeping with best practice and keeping the best interests of the child to the fore and with due consideration to maintaining the child's personal dignity. Such procedures, when agreed will be communicated to all parties involved and recorded.

Staff Cars:

Children will never be taken alone in staff cars. In the rare occasions that staff member drive children to or from a venue there will always be two adults in the car.

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff:

It is the responsibility of Anthony Creevey (Principal) to bring this policy and the Child First Guidelines to the attention of all of the staff working in the school. Child Protection is listed on the Staff Meeting agenda each September.

After school classes:

All teachers and supervisors of After School Classes are aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and agree to operate in accordance with it.

Attendance:

School attendance is monitored carefully. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse. The NEWB will be informed of any concerns relating to a child's attendance. We will issue a letter to parents if their child has missed 15 days. Children who miss 20 days or more will be reported to the NEWB in accordance with legislation.

One-to One Teaching:

Parents will agree in writing if 1-1 teaching is taking place. Where practical children in Learning Support/Resource will be taught in small groups. If there is no window in the classroom door, the door to the room will be left open if a teacher is alone with a child.

Additional Child Protection Guidelines:

The following procedures are also in place in our school:

- Supervision of students is provided (i) before first class every morning (ii) at morning break (iii) at lunchtime and (iv) after last class in the evening. Up to 14 staff per day provide extensive supervision in the school covering the outside areas as well as the corridors and the assembly area.
- Students requiring basic First Aid are sent to the administration block where they are attended to by the Principal, Deputy Principal or a member of staff. First Aid supplies are monitored and kept in stock at all times.

- In the case of a more serious injury, the student is attended to as above and a parent/guardian is contacted immediately. In agreement with the parent/guardian, the student may be collected and signed-out or brought to the G.P. / A & E by a member of staff. The welfare of the student is always the top priority in such cases.

- All teams who travel to away games will be accompanied by two members of staff. This is deemed a necessity, particularly should any accident/incident occur which may require a staff member to accompany a student to the G.P / A & E.

- A portable defibrillator will be brought to any school match and staff have received training on its use.

- Where large groups of students travel to events outside the school, adequate teacher supervision will be put in place to ensure the safety of each student.

- Changing rooms (either at home or away) will be monitored appropriately while, at the same time, allowing students space and privacy.

- In the case where a student is entitled to one-to-one resource hours with a teacher, these classes take place in the administration block of the school which is openly visible. The teacher will use the co-ordinator's office or the meeting room where the door will remain open at all times.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request.

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