

# Child Protection Policy

## Coole N.S.

(An extended version of this policy is available in the school office on request)

### INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The staff, parents and management of Coole N.S. have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines.

The policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the following areas:-

- a) Prevention- curriculum provision
- b) Procedures- procedures for dealing with concerns/disclosures
- c) Practice- best practice in child protection

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

This policy aims to

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment
- Provide a personal safety skills education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in the school
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community
- Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children and staff
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of and familiar with the “Children First” and the DES guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosures or child abuse
- Provide for on going training in this and related areas for all school staff.

### PREVENTION

The Stay Safe programme is the primary resource used in the school to provide education for children on abuse prevention. The programme is taught as part of the school’s SPHE curriculum under the strand unit safety and protection. On enrolment of their child parents will be informed that the Stay Safe programme is in use in the school and a copy of the Stay Safe “A Parent’s Guide” provided.

The formal lessons of the programme will be taught in their entirety every second year in accordance with the SPHE two year cycle plan.

Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible. The Stay Safe pack for children with a learning difficulty will be purchased. The LS/RS teacher will liaise with the class teacher when this strand of SPHE is being taught and differentiate where needed.

## PROCEDURES

All staff (Teachers, Ancillary and Secretarial) will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in “Children First” and the DES document “Child Protection, Guidelines and Procedures”

(See attached appendix pages 5 to 20 from the above DES guidelines)

The Board of Management of Coole N.S. has appointed Sara McCauley as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Mary McHale as the deputy DLP.

The staff and management of Coole N.S. 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 should only be given on a “need to know” basis.

## PRACTICE

The following areas have been considered by the staff and board of management of this school as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and board of management have agreed that the following practices be adopted.

### 1. 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;

- 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 personnel nature for children that they can do for themselves.

### 2. Visitors/ Guest Speakers

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

### 3. 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 pupil and 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.

### 4. 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 two members of staff familiar to the child. A record of all such incidents will be kept and principal and parents will be informed.

### 5. One to One Teaching

It is the policy of 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 assistances will be carried out under the direction of the classroom teacher in an open environment.

### 6. 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 areas and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff be expected to dress/undress a child in a cubical/ private area. In such situations where privacy is required the parent/guardian will be asked to assist the child.

During swimming lessons there will always be a staff member in the changing rooms. In the absence of a male teacher, a female teacher will be present in the boys changing rooms. With respect to younger children the teacher may assist in changing if necessary e.g. to speed the child up.

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 principal and the parents.

### LINKS TO OTHER POLICY /PLANNING AREAS

Prevention: SPHE Curriculum, Stay Safe Programme, Code of Discipline

Procedures: Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Statement.

Practice: Sports Policy, Outings.

### REVIEW and MONITORING

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff. All teaching staff received supplementary training in Stay Safe, DES Child Protection Guidelines and the Children First documents on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

Policy adopted by the BOM on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ -  
Chairperson.