

BANAGHER COLLEGE COLÁISTE na SIONNA

Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management has adopted as policy the Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools as published by the Department of Education and Science and is guided by the DES Circular 0065/2011 and Children First 'National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' 2011. Circular 0065/2011 outlines new 'oversight arrangements and these are incorporated into the guidelines which follow. Copies of all relevant documents are available from the principal or may be viewed on www.education.ie/www.dcyia.ie

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.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Paddy Scales, Principal.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Kevin Jordan, Deputy Principal.

Confidentiality

Information only shared on a need to know basis.

Parents should be informed of a report to a Health Board unless this would endanger the child. A written record of all dealings must be kept. Verbatim if necessary.

School personnel DO NOT investigate, that is the role of the Health Board or gardai.

Legislative Basis

- Protection for persons Reporting Child Abuse 1998
- Qualified privilege (Common Law)
- Freedom of Information Act 1997
- Education Act 1998
- Education & Welfare 2000

Categories of Child Abuse

1. Child Neglect
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Physical Abuse

4. Sexual Abuse

Responsibilities

- Schools must provide the highest standard of care.
- All school personnel are well placed to observe behavioural changes/signs of abuse.
- B.O.M. /Laois & Offaly ETB MUST appoint a Designated Liaison person and Deputy Liaison Person.
- The Designated Liaison Person (D.L.P.) is generally the Principal.

Recognition of Abuse

- All personnel should be familiar with signs / symptoms.
- A person with concerns about a child should liaise with the D.L.P.
- Health Boards should always be notified of *reasonable grounds* for concern (may have been / is being/is at risk of being abused)

Designated Liaison Person

- D.L.P. for schools will be involved in all dealings with Health Boards, Gardai and other parties re child abuse.
- Resource person for staff having concerns
- Knowledgeable, trained about child protection.
- Notifies B.O.M. / Laois & Offaly ETB if report is made.

Recording Disclosure

- Note what you have seen / observed
- Describe / sketch physical injuries
- Record what the child has said, using the child's exact words
- Avoid conjecture/supposition
- Sign/date/give to D.L.P. (who retains in secure location)

Action to be taken by school personnel

- School personnel who receive an allegation or have a suspicion re abuse should report to D.L.P. without delay.
- The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

Allegations/ Suspicions of abuse by school personnel

- Primary goal is the protection, safety and welfare of the child.
- Employer also has duties and responsibilities towards employee.

Procedures that are to be followed

- Reporting procedures in respect of allegation, (Ensure that no child is put at unnecessary risk/ensure necessary protective measures are taken)
- Procedures for addressing the employment issue are the responsibility of the employer.

Employer procedure

- Should seek Legal advice
- Adhere to written protocol to authorise any actions required to protect children
Principles of natural justice and fair procedures to be adhered to
- Actions intended to be precautionary, not disciplinary
- Measures should be proportionate to level of risk to Child.
- Actions should not be unreasonably penalise employee, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children.

Action by employer

- Inform employee that
 1. An allegation has been made.
 2. The nature of it.
 3. Whether report has been sent to HB
- Give employee any written records (copy)
- Offer opportunity to respond in writing
- If unsure if allegations warrants absence from school consult Child Care Manager.

Further action by Employer

- Ensure actions taken do not undermine any investigation by Health Board and Gardai.
- Maintain close liaison with above.
- Maintain strict confidentiality
- Follow up action should accord with established grievance and disciplinary procedures.