

Child Protection Policy

Introduction and Rationale:

The Board of Management of Lisnagry National School 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 BOM of Lisnagry National School has agreed the following child protection policy. This document was compiled in February 2012 as a response to recent changes in legislation. It was compiled in response to the publication of the following documents:

- Circular 65/2011 - 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' (DES)
- 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' (Dept of Children and Youth Affairs)
- Child Protection Guidelines for Primary and Post Primary Schools (DES)

This document further develops previous policy in this area and takes account of the provisions of the following pieces of legislation:

- The Education Act 1998
- The Education Welfare Act 2000
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003
- Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003

The BOM 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.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mrs. Bernie Kennedy.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Mr. Michael Feeney.

Lisnagry National School seeks to help the children to grow and develop into healthy, confident, mature adults, capable of realising their full potential as human beings. We strive to create a happy, safe environment for the children where they feel secure, knowing that if they have concerns, they will be listened to with understanding and respect and they will be acted upon with sensitivity.

In its policies, practices and activities, Lisnagry National School 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:

Aims:

- To fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- To 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
- To develop a practice of openness with parents so that they understand the legal obligations placed on the school and staff to report incidences of child abuse.
- To fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters

- The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability

Certain policies such as Lisnagry National Schools' Code of Behaviour/Anti-bullying Policy, Pupil Attendance Policy and the Supervision of Pupils Policy will take particular account of this Child Protection Policy. This policy will also be considered with reference to the participation by pupils in sporting activities, other extra-curricular activities and school outings. Other practices and activities, where child protection might have particular relevance, will take due consideration of the procedures outlined within this policy (Appendix A). The Board 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 has been made available to school personnel and the Parent Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the DES and the patron if requested.

Confidentiality

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the interests of the child. 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 the Health Board or An Garda Síochána should inform a 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 reasons for not doing so.

In emergency situations, where the Health Board cannot be contacted, and the child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, An Garda Síochána should be contacted immediately. A child should not be left in a dangerous situation pending Health Board intervention.

Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse

The protection for persons reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of an Garda Síochána, see 'Child Protection' (DES 2001, page 6).

Qualified Privilege

People making a report to the DLP in good faith have 'qualified privilege' under common law, see 'Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures' (DES 2001, page 6). Reports made to Health Boards 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.

Freedom of Information Act 1997:

Reports made to Health Boards may be subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1997, which 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.

Role of Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

In Lisnagry National school, the Deputy Principal Ms. Bernie Kennedy, appointed by the BOM, is the DLP. Mr. Michael Feeney acts as Deputy DLP. Both teachers have recently undertaken training from the Child Abuse Prevention Programme. CAPP provided training to the whole school staff on the Stay Safe Programme.

The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection and will represent the school in all correspondence with Health Boards, An Garda Siochana and other parties in connection with allegations of abuse. All matters pertaining to the processing or investigation of child abuse should be processed through the DLP.

The Designated Liaison Person or her nominated replacement, shall immediately inform the Chairperson of the Board of Management of the school that a report involving a pupil in the school has been submitted to the relevant Health Board or the Gardai.

The DLP shall also inform the school authority of the number of cases where the DLP submitted a report to the HSE or Gardai or 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 include the number of all such cases and this shall be recorded in the minutes of the board meeting.

Actions to be taken by the DLP

If a school employee receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a pupil is being abused, he/she should report the matter to the DLP. The need for confidentiality is essential. Therefore the child concerned will be identified on any written reports, only by their number on the school register.

- If the school employee and the DLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for suspicion or allegation, the DLP should report the matter immediately to the relevant Health Board
- A report should be made in person, by phone or in writing to the social worker on duty. Personal contact with the social worker is preferable, to allow for the transfer of as much information as possible
- In the event of an emergency or the non-availability of Health Board staff, the report should be made to An Garda Siochana
- The report should include as much information as possible on the Standard Reporting form
- The Chairperson of the Board of Management should be informed at this point
- The parents/guardians of the child will be informed also, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place the child at further risk. A decision not to inform the parents/guardians should be recorded briefly along with the reason for not doing so
- Where school personnel have concerns about a child, but are unsure whether to report the matter, the DLP shall seek appropriate advice, by consulting with Health Board staff. She shall be explicit that she is not making a report but is requesting advice. It would not be envisaged that the DLP would supply identifying details at this informal stage, as are required when making a report. If a Health Board advises that a referral should be made, then the DLP should act on that advice
- If, following discussions, the DLP decides that the matter should not be formally referred to the Health Board, then she should give a clear statement, in writing to the school employee, as to the reasons why action is not being taken. The school employee should be advised that if he/she remains concerned, about the situation, he/she is free to consult with or report to the Health Board again.

- It is essential that at all time these matters be treated in the strictest confidence and not discussed except among those mentioned above.

The Role of the Board of Management

The most important consideration to be taken into account by a Board of Management is the protection of children, and their safety and well-being must be a priority. However, because of the involvement of school employees, the BOM has duties in respect of them as well.

As employers, Boards of Management should note that legal advice should always be sought in these cases.

There are two procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the allegation
- The procedures for dealing with the employee

In the case of primary schools, the DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to the appropriate Health Board, while the Chairperson of the BOM, acting in consultation with his/her Board, is responsible for addressing the employment issues. However, where the allegation of abuse is against the DLP, the Chairperson of the BOM will assume responsibility for reporting the matter to the Health Board.

The primary aim of the BOM is to protect the children within the school to whom they have a duty of care. However, school employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations and therefore any threat of abuse should be dealt with sensitively, and the employee fairly treated.

Reporting Procedure

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee, the DLP within the school should immediately act in accordance with the procedures outlined in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2 of the DES Guidelines. A written statement of the allegations should be sought from the person/agency making the allegation.

School employees, other than the DLP, who receive allegations of abuse against another school employee, should report the matter without delay to the DLP as outlined in Paragraph 3.1.1 of the DES Guidelines.

School employees who form suspicions regarding the conduct of another school employee should consult with the DLP. The DLP may wish to consult with the appropriate Health Board. If the DLP the school employee are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion, the DLP should report the matter to the relevant Health Board immediately. The DLP should also report the matter to the Chairperson of the BOM.

Action to be taken by Chairperson

When a BOM Chairperson becomes aware of an allegation of abuse against a school employee, the chairperson should privately inform the employee of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her
- The nature of the allegation
- Whether or not the matter has been reported to the appropriate Health Board by the DLP

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 specified period of time. The employee should be told that his/her explanation to the BOM would also have to be passed on to the Health Board. At this stage, it should be remembered that the first priority is to make sure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. The BOM Chairperson should as a matter of urgency take any necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children.

If, in the Chairperson's opinion, the nature of the allegations warrants immediate action, the Chairperson, on behalf of the BOM, should direct that the employee absent him/her from the school with immediate effect. When the Chairperson is unsure as to whether the nature of the allegations warrants the absence of the employee from school while the matter is being investigated, s/he should consult with the Childcare Manager of the local Health Board, and/or Garda Síochána for advice as to the action that those authorities might consider necessary. Following these consultations, the Chairperson should have due regard for the advice offered.

Any absence by a school employee would be regarded as administrative leave of absence with pay, and not a suspension. Such a leave of absence would not imply any degree of guilt on the part of the school employee. Where such leave of absence is invoked, the DES should be contacted with regard to:

1. Formal approval for the paid leave of absence of the school employee
2. Departmental sanction for the employment of a substitute teacher.

Role of Staff Member (teachers, caretakers, SNA's secretary)

It is the role of all staff members to be observant of all pupils in their care and to report any suspicion of abuse or disclosure immediately to the DLP or in her absence, the Deputy DLP

When recording any information in writing, it is vital that this is totally factual and quotes the child exactly

It is also a requirement that all matters pertaining to suspicions of abuse or actual abuse be treated with the strictest confidence. The child must only be identified by their number on the school register.

Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse:

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

Neglect:

This 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,

medical care. Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by his/her health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of a similar age. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific moment.

The school will be alert and vigilant around the following signs of neglect:

- Children presenting with a series of minor or frequent injuries who may not be having their needs met for supervision and safety outside the school
- Children whose ongoing failure to gain weight or who's height is significantly below average because of deprivation of adequate nutrition
- Children who consistently miss school and are being deprived of intellectual stimulation

The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

Emotional Abuse:

This is normally to be found in the relationship between caregiver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. The school will be alert and vigilant around the following signs of emotional abuse.

Examples of emotional abuse of children include:

- the imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
- emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer;
- unresponsiveness of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way;
- under- or over-protection of the child;
- failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- exposure to domestic violence

The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

Physical Abuse:

This is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

The school will be alert and vigilant around the following signs of physical abuse:

- Children presenting with a series of minor injuries who may not be having their needs met for supervision and safety outside the school
- children exposed to excessive force in handling
- Munchausen's syndrome by proxy (where parents fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness)
- Children exposed to a substantial risk of significant harm
- Children presenting with signs of having been shaken, deliberate poisoning or attempted suffocation

The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's physical safety and protection are considered to be at significant risk.

Sexual Abuse:

This occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. The school will be alert and vigilant around signs of sexual abuse. Examples of child sexual abuse include:

exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;

intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;

masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;

sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal;

sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse.

consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. In law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation.

Each of these categories is defined in full in Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011) pp. 8-9.

Guidelines for Recognition of Child Abuse:

A list of child abuse indicators is contained in Appendix 1 'Children First', pages 70-74). This policy draws particular attention to 'persistent evidence' of neglect, including indicators such as no lunch, lack of uniform, no homework, poor attendance, persistent health problems, lack of sleep indicating inappropriate television viewing 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 identification of child abuse:

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

Consider possibility: Possibility of child abuse should be considered if a child appears to have suffered suspicious injury for which no reasonable explanation can be offered.

Also if a child is distressed without obvious reason or displays persistent or new behavioural problems. Also if a child displays unusual or fearful response to carers/parents.

Look for signs of abuse: Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or development. Pattern of signs is likely to be more indicative of abuse. Children may hint they are being harmed and may make disclosures. Disclosures should always be believed. Less obvious signs could be gently explored with the child without direct questioning. Play situations and drawing may reveal information. It is important to always be open to alternative explanations for physical or behavioural signs of abuse.

Record Information: If abuse is suspected, it is important to establish ground for concern by obtaining as much detailed information as possible. Observations should be accurately recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any relevant information. They should be given to the DLP and will be stored in a secure, private area.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

- Specific indication from child that she/he was abused
- Account by person who saw child being abused
- Evidence such as injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way
- Injury or behaviour consistent with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse
- Consistent indication over period of time that child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

It is important that persons reporting suspected child abuse to a Health Board should establish basis for their concerns. A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. They should not interview a child or child's parents/carers without first consulting with the Health Board.

Impediments to Reporting of Child Abuse: Abuse is difficult and to some a distasteful subject. The belief that parents or persons in charge of children would hurt or neglect them is hard to sustain. Therefore it is easy to deny, minimise or explain away any signs that a child is being harmed even when evidence exists. At times it is hard to distinguish between abusive situations and those where other social problems are present. Sympathy for families in difficult circumstance can sometimes dilute personal or professional concerns about safety and welfare of children.

Reluctance to act on suspicions can often stem from uncertainty and fear. Professionals may be afraid of repercussions, afraid of breaking confidence, afraid of being disloyal, afraid of being thought insensitive.

It is most important that we do not let any of the above impede us in reporting child abuse. The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 provides immunity

from civil liability to persons who report reasonably and in good faith to designated officers of the Health Board or any member of An Garda Síochána.

Handling Disclosures from Children

'Child Protection Procedures' (DES 2011, Chapter 3) gives comprehensive details of how disclosures should be approached. Staffs are advised to deal with each situation sensitively, reassure the child but not to make promises that cannot be fulfilled. (Appendix E)

The adult should not ask leading questions or make suggestions. They should explain that further help may have to be sought. The discussion should then be recorded accurately.

The record should include reference to what was observed with sketches 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 school DLP.

If the reporting person and the DLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion/allegation, the procedures outlined in 'Children First' (page 14) will be adhered to. Standardised reporting forms should be used (Appendix B). The content of the report should follow the guidelines on page 14 of 'Children First'. The Chairperson of the BOM will be informed before the DLP makes contact with the relevant authorities.

School Measures Taken to Protect the Children in Our Care

There are a number of areas where common sense in our school should 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. Lisnagry National School will fully implement the Stay Safe programme. The whole school undertakes this during the month of September. Also the SPHE E Safety Lessons produced by Web Wise are taught from 2nd -6th Class annually.
 2. A copy of the school's child protection policy, which includes the names of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP, will be made available to all school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request
 3. The name of the 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 school authority of those cases where a report involving a child in the school has been submitted to the HSE, the DLP shall 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 BOM meeting, the Principal's Report shall include the number of all such cases and this shall be recorded in the minutes of the board meeting.
 5. Lisnagry National School will undertake an annual review of its Child Protection Policy and its implementation by the school. A checklist, to be used in undertaking the review is included in (Appendix C). The school has put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement which might be identified in the annual 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 Parent Association. A record of the review and its outcome shall be made available, if requested, to the patron and the DES.
- Discussed by Staff at Staff Meeting on 27th February 2012

Lisnagry National School Child Protection Policy

Ratification of Policy

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

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 27th March 2012.

Signed: Brendan Conroy Signed: Michael Feeney
Chairperson of Board of Management Principal

Date of next review: March 2013

The Board further endorses the Deputy Principal, Bernie Kennedy as the school DLP and the Principal Michael Feeney as the Deputy DLP.

On behalf of the Board of Management:

Brendan Conroy (Chairperson) Date: 27th March 2012

Appendix A

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 that the following practices be adopted:

- 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 personal 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 a child
- The use of sexually explicit or pornographic material

All media products (CDs, DVDs etc. should be checked for their appropriateness with regard to age and suitability.

Visitors/Guest Speakers

Vetted guest speakers and visiting teachers of varying disciplines, employed by the BOM of Lisnagry National School to perform specific duties, will be allowed work with a class while being supervised by a class teacher.

Visitors/Guest speakers should never be left alone with pupils. The school (principal/teachers) has a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use is appropriate. All visitors cannot enter the school without contacting the office by using the bell fitted at the main entrance doors and giving their reason for entry. Teachers on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the school yard and will ascertain their intentions. They will be supervised in the discharge of their business.

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 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 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.

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 members of staff familiar to the child. In all such situations, two members of staff should be present. A record of all such incidents will be kept and Principal and parents will be notified. Adults will always make sure that any physical contact is for the purpose of meeting the needs of the child. Adults will always respect the dignity of the child. In the event of such happening, embarrassment will be kept to a minimum.

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 our Incident book and will be addressed as part of our Health and Safety Policy.

On-to-one teaching

- It is the policy in 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 Assistants will be 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 and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/ volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required, the parents/guardians of the child will be asked to assist the child. Lisnagry National School will endeavour to have at least one male volunteer/member of staff in the male changing area and at least one female members of staff/ volunteer in the female changing area.

At all times there must be adequate supervision of pupils. 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 the Principal and parents.

Attendance

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

Behaviour

Children are encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

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.

Children travelling in staff cars

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

Communication

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral Language/RE programmes allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which is hoped will aid the pupil-teacher relationship. 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 attend. Further details on communications are found in the school's Communication Policy.

Children's Photography

On admission to the school, Parents/Guardians are requested to sign a permission note for photographs of their children to be taken. Photographs by outside agencies (i.e. Press Photographers etc.) are taken under the supervision of a staff member.

DVDs

Staff will always ensure that any DVD shown to the children is age appropriate. Lisnagry N.S. is a primary school and as such the following are the only DVDs that should be shown to children.

General Viewing (G)

Parental Guidance (PG)

12 A (For children who are twelve years old with adult supervision).

No DVDs rated as suitable for 15 year olds, 18 year olds or adults will be shown to the children.

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures (DES, 2011) but particularly the recently published Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). The DLP will give a copy of the DES Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures, Chapters 3 & 4 and Appendix 1 of Children First and this Child Protection Policy to all new staff. In addition all staff will receive the Lisnagry National School (blue coloured) reporting forms which is used for monitoring or recording any child protection issues in the school. These are filed in a locked cabinet.

All class teachers are expected to teach the designated SPHE objectives for their class. A member of staff, will be responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives. Mrs Kennedy is responsible for ensuring that new teachers know how to fill in the roll book correctly and informing the teacher of record keeping procedures within the school.

Induction of Pupils

All parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). All parents will be informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development e.g. RSE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe and SPHE. All new parents will be 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. All parents will be given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

Internet Safety

It is the intention of the Principal and Staff at Lisnagry National school to ensure that child protection concerns will be addressed in the school's Acceptable Use Policy as part of its Information and Communication Technology policy. The Stay Safe lessons in each classroom will be supplemented with a lesson from the Webwise resource pack recently made available to schools. There will also be annual meetings during which parents will be informed about to stay abreast of the ever-changing situation regarding internet access.

Record Keeping

Teachers will keep records on each child's reports using Lisnagry National Schools Pupil Profiles. These records are kept in the filing cabinet of the strong room. Roll books will be updated daily. Sensitive information regarding children will be shared on a need-to-know basis. All educational files of pupils who no longer attend this school are kept in the filing cabinet also. Further details on record keeping will be found in the school's Record Keeping Policy.

Recruitment and Selection of Staff

All staff employed from September 2009 will not be allowed work with the children until they are vetted by the Gardaí. The Teaching Council arrange teacher vetting for newly qualified teachers. Staff will be asked for copies of their vetting forms and these will be kept on file in the Principal's office

Special Needs: The Stay Safe Programme will be taught each year. Where there are children with limited academic ability, the content and activities of the lesson will be differentiated to help them to understand the message of the lesson.

Supervision

The school's supervision policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks. A rota will be displayed to cover 11 o'clock and lunchtime breaks. During breaks, all pupils are supervised by teachers in the school yard. To access toilets on the corridor, children must have permission of the supervising teacher. A buzzer system to admit visitors is in operation on the front door. It is proposed to lock back doors during class for security. Parents must sign a notebook if a child's being removed from the premises during the school day. See Supervision Policy for agreed rules around break-times and procedures around teacher absences.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school playground. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, 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 B

Reporting Form for Child Protection and Welfare Concerns to a Health Board

1. Date of Report
2. Name of person reporting
3. Address of person reporting
4. Relationship of reporting person with the child concerned
5. Method of report (telephone call, personal call to office)
6. Family Details

Details of Child Concerned

Surname
Forename
DOB
Male/female
Alias (known as)
Address:
Correspondence address (if different)
Telephone number

7. State whether you consider your report to indicate (a) suspected or actual child abuse or (b) need for family support, giving reasons

	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Neglect
Suspect				
Actual				

8. Details of other family members/household members

Name	Age	Relationship to child	Employment/School	Location

In cases of emergency, or outside Health Board hours, reports should be made to An Garda Síochána.

9. Name of Other Professionals Involved with Child/ren and/or Parents/Carers.

Public health nurse:
School:

General practitioner:

Any other agency or professional involved (please describe the nature of any involvement):

Report Details.

10. Describe, as fully as possible the nature of the problem or incident being reported, giving details of times and dates of individual incidents, the circumstances in which they occurred, any other persons who were present at the time, and their involvement

11. Has any explanation been offered by the child, and/or parents/carers, which would account for the current problem or incident? (Details)

12. As far as possible, describe the state of the child/ren's physical, mental and emotional well-being.

13. If child abuse is being alleged, who is believed to be responsible for causing it?

Include (if known)

Name:

Address:

Degree of contact with child:

Degree of contact with other children:

14. Describe (in detail) any risks to which the child/ren in this situation is/are believed to be exposed.

15. How did this information come to your attention

16. What has prompted you to report your concern at this time?

17. What evidence of harm exists at present?

18. Are there any factors in the child and/or parents/carers' present situation, which may have relevance to the current concern? (for example, recent illness, bereavement, separation, addiction, mental health problem or other difficulty)

19. Are there any factors in the child and/or parents/carers' situation which could be considered protective or helpful (for example, extended family or community support)?

20. Has any action been taken in response to the current concern or incident (Details)

21. Are the child's parents/ carers aware that this concern is being reported to the health board?

22. Is there a need for urgent protective action at this point?

23. Any other comments.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of its Child Protection Policy and the following checklist shall be used for this purpose.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. The BOM may wish to include other items in the checklist that are of particular relevance Lisnagry National School and reserves the right to do so if/when the need occurs.

1.	As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess other school policies, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence 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 the '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 (HSE and An Garda Síochána) 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 & 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 the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP?	YES	NO
14.	Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made?	YES	NO
15.	Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/ An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed?	YES	NO
16.	Were 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 Parents' Association has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	YES	NO

Appendix D: Child Protection Meetings/Case Conferences

The child protection conference is an essential mechanism in health boards in the effective operation of the child protection services under the Child Care Act 1991. It is a forum for the co-ordination of information from all relevant sources including where necessary school employees. The child protection conference plays a pivotal role in making recommendations and planning for the welfare of children who may be at serious risk.

The procedure undertaken should a staff member be requested to attend care conferences are as follows:

- A child request will be made by the Health Board for a school employee to attend a child protection conference to the DLP
- Board of Management Chairperson may through the DLP request appropriate authorities to clarify why the attendance of the school employee at the child protection conference is necessary and who else will be present
- Substitute costs will be met by the DES in respect of teachers attending during school hours. A letter from the health board confirming attendance of teacher to be submitted to DES together with application for payment
- The person attending a child protection conference should provide a report to the conference on a form provided by the Health Board. Different health boards may have different reports
- The professional, according to Children First Guidelines, should always be informed when children and/or parents/guardians are going to be present at child protection conferences. Any school personnel who may have a concern about parent/guardian involvement should contact chairperson of child protection conference in advance for guidance
- The conference may recommend that agencies provide resources and services to the family. Participants may provide undertakings regarding actions that they agree to take. Recommendations may include the board taking legal advice with respect to an application for a Court Order to protect the child
- The school employee may be requested to keep the child's behaviour under closer observation, in a manner that is not inconsistent with the school employee's existing duties to his/her class as a whole. This may include observing a child's behaviour in terms of peer interactions, school progress, informal conversation
- In all cases, individuals who refer or discuss their concerns about the care and protection of children with Health Board staff should be informed of the steps to be taken by the professionals involved. Wherever appropriate and within the limits of confidentiality, Health Board staff have a responsibility to inform persons reporting the alleged child abuse and other professionals about the outcomes of any enquiry or investigation into that reported concern.

Roles and Responsibilities of Child Protection Participants

Notwithstanding the pivotal role of the chairperson, the quality and effectiveness of a child protection conference will depend on the willingness and commitment of all participants, particularly with regard to the following factors:

- Adequate preparation
- Provision of written reports which cover information about the child and parents/carers, past and present concerns, own current involvement and factually based assessment of the current situation and recommendations
- Open mindedness and willingness to constructively debate conflicting views, always keeping the welfare of the child paramount
- Respect for the contribution of all participants, irrespective of status or previous disagreement
- Sensitivity to the feeling of the family members present
- Acceptance of individual responsibilities and tasks and commitment to carry them out.

- Appendix E: How to Handle Disclosures from a Pupil

An abused child is likely to be under severe emotional stress and a staff member may be the only adult whom the child is prepared to trust. Great care should be taken not to damage that trust.

Staff members need to respond to disclosure using tact and sensitivity. Need to reassure child, retain trust while explaining need for action and possible consequences. It is important to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g. not to tell anyone.

The following action should be taken:

- Listen to the child
- Don't ask leading questions nor make suggestions to child
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises
- Don't stop a child recalling significant events
- Don't over react
- Explain that further help may have to be sought
- Record discussion accurately and retain the record
- Report information to DLP
- Give record of discussion to DLP who should retain this
- It is very important that staff notes carefully what they saw and when. Any comment by a child of how an injury occurred should be recorded. All records so created should be regarded as highly confidential and retained in a secure location by the DLP.