

## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Scoil Bhríde, Naas**

In accordance with its Catholic Ethos, Scoil Bhríde aims to ensure the provision of a safe, secure and happy environment and to foster a warm and welcoming atmosphere for each of its students. Being mindful of Department of Education and Science Circulars 0061/2006 and 0046/2007 the Board of Management adopts the following guidelines to be implemented by all personnel in the school:-

1. 'Child Protection Procedures Primary and Post Primary' published by the Department of Education and Science in 2012 (*available in the Principal's Office*).
2. 'Children First - National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' (Children First) published by the Department of Health and Children in 2011 (*available in the Principal's Office*).
3. 'Best Practice Guidelines and Procedures for Child Protection', which were drawn up specifically for Scoil Bhríde in conjunction with the Child Protection Guidelines and The Children First Guidelines and in consultation with staff members. *See Appendix A*

The Designated Liaison Person: *See Appendix B*

The Child Protection Policy will be put on the agenda of the first Staff meeting of every school year.

The Board recognises that it has two duties of care. The primary duty is the protection, safety and welfare of the children attending Scoil Bhríde. The Board as an employer also has duties and responsibilities towards its employees. As an employer, the Board will seek legal advice if an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee. Child protection and health and safety matters will be included as items on the agenda of all BOM meetings forthwith.

The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support required to implement this policy is provided for all school personnel and members of the Board of Management.

The Principal is responsible for bringing this policy to the attention of all new school personnel.

This policy has been adopted by the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012..

The Board undertakes to circulate this Child Protection policy statement to all parents and guardians at time of enrolment and to all PTA members. This policy statement and "Children First" will be available for viewing at the school office. This policy statement regarding Child Protection at Scoil Bhríde applies to all working in the school. It will be subject to review at the end of each academic year forthwith.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Ryan  
Chairperson

Date:

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## Appendix A

### **Scoil Bhríde Best Practice Guidelines for Child Protection**

- a) Scoil Bhríde has adopted the Stay Safe Programme as the Primary Resource to provide education for children on abuse prevention. All teaching staff in the school should ensure that this programme is taught in accordance with the school's SPHE policy. Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the programme are reinforced whenever possible
- b) All teachers should adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (copy in Principal's Office or may be downloaded from [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie))
- c) School personnel should be sensitive to the fact that comments of a sexual nature are inappropriate. Only age appropriate language, media products and activities should be used with the students. Erotic or pornographic material is never acceptable. All resources to be used by a teacher in the classroom should be checked in advance by the teacher.
- d) Scoil Bhríde respects the physical integrity of the student. Physical contact should only happen in a professional capacity (e.g. hand-over-hand teaching) in public view. Scoil Bhríde has students of many different nationalities. School personnel should be sensitive to what might be unacceptable to students from different cultures. Students will be encouraged to save affectionate gestures for their families.
- e) The class teacher (or another teacher in the school) will always be present when a visitor/guest speaker addresses a class. In such cases the subject matter will always be in accordance with school policies. The principal will always be consulted before anyone is invited to the school.
- f) School personnel should always be respectful of the privacy of students particularly in changing rooms, showers and toilets. Each classroom has two toilet cubicles. However, only one child will be allowed use the toilets at any time. During the school day, children are allowed use the toilets in the classrooms or in the PE hall. All other toilets are designated for staff use only. Children wear their tracksuits to school on PE days to avoid the need for changing at school. Parents/guardians will be contacted should a student have a toileting accident and a course of action will be decided. Should the school be unable to contact parents/guardians, the child will be provided with new underwear and a tracksuit bottoms. The child will change alone in the toilet. Parents of children prone to toileting accidents will be encouraged to leave a change of clothes in the child's classroom.  
Assistance will be given in the toilet to some of the children (with intimate care needs) enrolled in our ASD classes with prior parental consent and in the presence of other member(s) of staff.
- g) The school is unable to facilitate requests from the public to use school toilets during the school day. Staff and visitors must use designated staff toilets only.
- h) At 'out-of-school' events such as basketball or football matches, children will change in the school before they go. In cases where this is not possible and that the children have to change at a sporting event, every effort will be made to ensure the privacy of the student is respected.
- i) Swimming:
  - a. Every effort will be made to ensure that a male and a female teacher will accompany classes that are going swimming.
  - b. Two changing rooms are provided for the children at the swimming pool (one for the girls and one for the boys). The teachers will supervise by walking through the changing rooms. A school employee should never find himself/herself in a situation where he/she is in the changing room alone with one child.
  - c. As the swimming pool is open to the public during school sessions, it has been agreed with the swimming pool management, that children who may need to go to the toilet during the swimming session will be accompanied by a teacher/SNA to the 'Disabled' toilet and not the cubicles for 'Men' and 'Women'. The 'Disabled' toilet is a single cubicle and the child will not be in any danger of meeting any other person there. The teacher/SNA will remain outside and wait to accompany the child back to the pool.

- d. In general it is expected that the children going swimming from Scoil Bhríde will be in Third Class and will be able to dress, undress and dry themselves independently. Should a child need assistance with swimming caps, this assistance will be provided by the teacher at the edge of the pool. Should a child with special needs need assistance, this assistance will be provided following procedures that have been agreed with the child's parents/guardians.
- e. The children in our ASD classes attend swimming lessons every week. Assistance, if required, will be given in the changing room to the students of these classes with prior parental consent and in the presence of other member(s) of staff.
- j) When working with children with special needs or in the school's Unit for children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, school personnel are required to be aware of the specific considerations (behavioural issues, communication issues, intimate care needs, physical limitations etc.) that may need addressing. Procedures on how best to address these specific considerations within the limitations imposed by school resources will be agreed by the parents, the principal and the relevant school personnel.
- k) School personnel should not give lifts in their cars to individual students.
- l) Scoil Bhríde feels that one-to-one teaching should only happen in exceptional cases. Support teachers (Resource, Learning Support or Language) will do a mixture of in-class work and small group work. It is envisaged that should Support teachers need to withdraw students from class that this will be done in a group situation. The Reading Recovery programme requires that children work with the teacher on a one-to-one basis. For the school year 2011/2012 Reading Recovery has been organised to take place in a room that is shared by five Support Teachers. At present we have three children who are withdrawn on a one-to-one basis. Two of these children are accompanied by an SNA and the Support teacher, who works with the other child, is one of the five Support Teachers who share a room.
- m) Students will be supervised at all times. Procedures for the supervision of children during break times are outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour.
- n) Alcohol should not be on the school premises.
- o) School personnel should never be under the influence of alcohol or any substance which impairs their ability or medical fitness while working in the school.
- p) Smoking is not allowed on the school premises (this includes the school building and the school grounds) and school personnel should not smoke in an area which may be within sight of the students.
- q) Photographs/video recordings of any student should not take place without the permission of the student's parents and without the knowledge of the principal.
- r) School personnel should avoid all inappropriate communication with any student through internet, e-mail, text messaging or otherwise.
- s) The children are not allowed have mobile phones in school. Should a parent need to contact a child, he/she may use the school's landline. When a group of children is out of the school, the teacher in charge will have a mobile phone.
- t) All staff employed by the Board of Management will be Garda vetted.
- u) All staff members will sign an annual confirmation that they adhere to the policy. *See Appendix C.*

## **Appendix B**

The Board of Management appoints Fiona O'Reilly (Principal) as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Mary French (Deputy Principal) as the deputy DLP. The Designated Liaison Person acts as a liaison person with the health authorities and other agencies (e.g. the Gardaí) and as a resource person to any staff member who has child protection concerns. At the first meeting of every new Board of Management, the DLP and the deputy DLP will be appointed for that Board's term of office.

## **Appendix C**

I have read and agree to adhere to Scoil Bhríde's Child Protection policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Position in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_