

## Child Protection Policy Lumcloon N.S.

The Board of Management of Lumcloon N.S. 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 Board of Management of Lumcloon N.S. has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. 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.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Catherine Doolan.
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Caitriona Kerin.
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Lumcloon N.S. 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;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- 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;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- 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.

5. The following school policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to child protection:

- Code of Behaviour/Anti-bullying policy
- Attendance policy
- Administration of Medicines policy
- Supervision
- Sporting/Extra-curricular activities
- School trips/tours
- Data Protection
- Substance use policy
- Stay safe/R.S.E.
- Critical incident policy

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.

6. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

7. 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 February 1st 2012

Latest Review Date: January 22nd, 2014

Date of next review: January 31st, 2015

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson Board of Management

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

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

***BEST PRACTICE IN CHILD PROTECTION  
IN LUMCLOON N.S.***

BEST PRACTICE in child protection is about our school identifying areas of practice that need to be addressed to ensure that children and staff are protected.

When children are under the supervision of the school, teachers are considered to be 'in loco parentis'. To that end, it is incumbent upon the school to act with prudence, having due regard for its responsibilities in the area of child protection.

This is particularly important when dealing with children with special educational needs. The school will at all times endeavour to put in place practices which take account of their individual needs, their protection and the protection of school staff involved with meeting those needs.

In Lumcloon N.S., school staff have been given an opportunity to identify and agree practices to be adopted. This written protocol outlining agreed practices will be appended to the school's Child Protection Policy document.

**PRACTICE**

PRACTICES have been identified which are specific to our school, based on the needs of the children, staffing, physical layout etc. It is agreed that all staff will work within these agreed practices.

It is important to note that while every effort will be made to adhere to agreed best practice, in the event of an emergency or unforeseen occurrence, this may not be possible or practicable. In such

instances, a full record of the incident should be made and reported to the principal, parents of children involved and Board of Management, as appropriate.

### **A. Recruitment and selection of staff**

The recruitment of staff and volunteers is crucial to ensuring that those working with the children in the school are safe adults insofar as this can be determined. While correct procedures must always be followed in relation to advertising, interviewing and the selection of staff, other practices should also be considered.

All applicants should be asked to supply in writing information which includes:

- appropriate personal details
- a resumé of past and current work/volunteering experience, indicating relevant qualifications or skills acquired
- at least two written references – verification of references should be sought through making verbal contact with the referees

GARDA VETTING, where necessary, should always be sought but it is important to note that garda vetting is not in itself a complete safeguard, as many perpetrators of abuse are not known to the authorities.

IT IS ALSO CONSIDERED GOOD PRACTICE to do background checks on anyone being considered to assist in a voluntary capacity or seeking work experience in the school. Many colleges and organisations seeking to place individuals on work experience in the school will supply that information.

IT IS ALSO THE RESPONSIBILITY of the Board of Management to ensure that all personnel are properly supervised and supported in the work they are doing.

### **B. General Conduct**

IT IS IMPERATIVE that in all dealings with the children in our care a balance is struck between the rights of the child and the need for intervention.

As a general rule any physical contact between school personnel and the child should be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult. While physical contact can be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child the following should be factors in assessing its appropriateness:

- it is acceptable to the child concerned
- it is open and not secretive
- it is appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child

School personnel should not do things of a personal nature for a child which the child can do for him/herself.

Inappropriate physical contact also includes rough physical play and horseplay (tickling, wrestling etc).

All children should be treated with equal respect – favouritism is not acceptable.

School personnel should never engage in or allow:

- the use of inappropriate language or behaviours, e.g sarcasm
- physical punishment of any kind
- sexually provocative games or sexually suggestive comments about or to a child
- the use of sexually explicit or pornographic material etc.

ALL MEDIA products: CDs, DVDs, computer software etc. – will be checked for their appropriateness with regard to age and suitability.

Where a doubt exists with regard to the suitability of material, parents, principal and/or board of management should be consulted as necessary. It is incumbent on the Board of Management to ensure that all school personnel are familiar with the DES guidelines on child protection and to ensure that they are adhered to in the event of concerns or disclosures around child protection. The Designated Liaison Person (Caitríona Kerin) should be notified promptly of any concerns with regard to the behaviour of a staff member or any allegations of abuse made by a child or an adult.

### **C. Toileting/Intimate Care**

#### **Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs**

Normally a child who has specific toileting needs will have a special needs assistant assigned to him/her. It is very important that, before the child is enrolled in the school, a meeting is held at which all school personnel involved with the child attend along with the child's parents/guardians. At that meeting the needs of the child should be addressed and agreement reached as to how the school can meet those needs. It is important that those involved with the intimate care of the child agree practices which are acceptable to the staff, the child and the parents. Lumcloon N.S. has developed an Intimate Care Policy outlining the agreed practices. Practices agreed are sufficiently flexible to cover unforeseen situations, e.g. if personnel involved in assisting the child are absent. The Board of Management has been made aware of practices agreed.

#### **Toileting 'Accidents'**

Toileting accidents are not uncommon, particularly at junior level. Parents may not be in a position to come to the school immediately should their child have a toileting accident and consideration has to be given to the implications of leaving a child unattended to in this situation. Unless there are very specific reasons why school staff should not attend to the child, procedures with which staff members are comfortable and which have due regard to minimising upset to the child should be agreed. A note will be kept of such incidents and parents will be informed.

### **D. Changing for Games/PE and Swimming**

There can be difficulties in this area and the school will remind parents to ensure that children wear suitable clothing for games/PE and swimming e.g. shoes with 'Velcro' fastenings and clothes that children can change easily.

However, in activities that require children to change clothing, the school undertakes to ensure that reasonable protection is afforded to the children and staff members involved, giving due regard to the potential health, safety and abuse concerns. To that end the Board of Management should ensure that:

- a balance is struck between the child's right to privacy and adequate supervision with due regard to gender issues
- where children with special needs need assistance with changing agreement will be reached between parents and staff as to how best those needs can be met
- staff will not help children change for/after swimming lessons. Parents are asked to ensure that pupils are able to dress themselves before they commence lessons. Parents are required to come to the pool to help pupils with changing in junior classes on the occasional times they partake in swimming sessions.
- staff will avoid assisting children with anything of a personal nature that the child can do for him/herself
- a report of any incident will be made to the principal, parents and Board of Management, as appropriate.

It is good practice to have at least two adults present while children are changing for swimming or at any 'out-of-school' event and the school will follow these guidelines where feasible with regard to staff availability. Depending on availability of cubicles pupils may be required to share with others/change in a communal changing area.

### **E. Supervision of Children**

School staff have agreed arrangements for the recording of accidents or incidents that take place while children are under the supervision of school staff. Inadequate supervision can contribute to greater opportunities for peer abuse, bullying and victimisation. The school's Supervision Policy details the school's procedures and practices in this area.

WHERE THE SCHOOL is aware of a court order being in place which prevents someone from having access to a child, a copy of that order will be requested by the school. In the event of the parent/guardian's non compliance with the court order the Gardaí will be summoned to the school to enforce it.

### **F. One-to-one teaching**

PROVIDED IT IS DEEMED APPROPRIATE for an individual one-to-one teaching may be provided. Every effort will be made to ensure the protection of children and staff. Regarding the physical environment, teaching will take place in a room with a vision panel in the door, the child will be seated so that they are clearly visible from outside the room, proper timetabling will be ensured etc.

IF A CHILD NEEDS learning support/resource teaching on a one-to-one basis, parents will be advised of any arrangements in place.

### **G. Visitor/Guest Speakers**

VISITORS/GUEST SPEAKERS will NOT be left alone with children. The school has a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the content/material in use is appropriate.

### **H. Internet Safety**

The school will ensure that child protection concerns are addressed in the school's Acceptable Use Policy as part of its Information and Communication Technology policy. These policies typically deal with issues relating to use of the Internet at school, such as access or use of children's photos or names on the school web-site.

Many aspects of Child Protection Policy require regular review and this is especially true of technological issues. It sometimes seems that, by the time we understand the Child Protection implications of a new technology, it has already moved on. The school will continue to aim at this moving target.

Issues which were considered in our school's policy on acceptable use of technology include:

- Mobile/Camera Phones
- Handheld game devices
- MP3 players etc.

IT IS RECOGNISED that none of the above technologies are inherently bad; many have significant potential benefits for the child but nevertheless are not allowed on the school premises

Up-to-date information will be readily available from various websites including [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) and these will be accessed and reviewed regularly.

### **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Research has shown that children with special educational needs are more vulnerable and consequently more at risk of becoming victims of abuse for reasons such as:

- Poor communication skills
- Limited sense of danger
- Need for intimate care
- Lack of mobility and greater reliance on adults
- Need for attention, friendship or affection
- Limited assertiveness and poorer self-confidence
- Limited understanding of sexuality or sexual behaviour
- Fear of not being believed

IT IS INCUMBENT UPON THE SCHOOL TO ENSURE that the personal safety education needs of all children with special educational needs are adequately met with due regard to the specific vulnerabilities of individual children. The Stay Safe pack '*Personal Safety Skills for Children with Learning Difficulties*' (1996) was designed to supplement the Stay Safe mainstream pack to assist teachers with this work. This will be taught in Lumcloon N.S. as part of the SPHE programme every second school year.

Consideration will also be given to how classwork can be supplemented by learning support and resource teachers, e.g. oral language, vocabulary development and communication work around the Stay Safe programme.

SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS play a vital role in the everyday care of children with special educational needs. It is, therefore, crucial that awareness and/or training around child protection is provided for all Special Needs Assistants and other staff who have contact with children.

### **DRAWING UP A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The staff, parents and Board of Management of the school have been involved in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy. The policy is in line with the current recommendations and

guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines.

The DES Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures have been adopted in their entirety by our school.

An individual copy of the school's child protection policy document and a copy of the Department of Education and Science Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures have been made available to all staff members. All staff will be reminded on a regular basis to familiarise themselves with the school policy in this area and every effort will be made to ensure that the attention of new staff is drawn to the school child protection policy.

The school Child Protection Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and training and information on child protection provided for all staff, parents and Board of Management members.