

Child Protection

Policy

St Tiernan's Community School

Parkvale

Balally

Dublin 16

Background

The Child Care Act (1991), Children's Act 2001 and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992), enshrine in law the paramount principles of the welfare of children. They were designed to promote the welfare and protection of children (a child in general terms means anyone under the age of 18). The Acts cover the rights and responsibilities of parents (teachers acting "in loco parentis"), the protection of children in emergencies, children in care, the supervision of pre-schools and the duty of the Health Service Executive (HSE) to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection.

In 2011 guidelines entitled "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools" were published by the Department of Education and Skills. These guidelines offer support and guidance to people who come into regular contact with children, and who are, therefore, in a position of responsibility in recognizing and responding to possible child abuse.

St Tiernan's Community School will adhere to these guidelines.

School Ethos:

A. Our School:

St Tiernan's Community School is a co-educational multid denominational second level school. The school is governed by a Board of Management representing the trustees, staff and parents.

The trustees are the FCJ Order, the Carmelite Order and the County Dublin Vocational Education Committee.

The Board of Management is comprised of six representatives of the trustees, two parents' representatives and two staff representatives. The current enrolment of the school is approximately three hundred and fifty eight students.

A. Our School Philosophy and Mission Statement:

St. Tiernan's is a school that was built in the community of Balally, for the young people of the area. While our traditional intake has broadly widened to take in students from numerous other areas, we truly remain a school in which 'community' is at the core. This characteristic nature, which had developed in our school, comes to us from the founding trustees. Carmelite Fathers seek to form communities where each person feels accepted and valued not for what he can do but simply because he is. One of the most important tasks entrusted to the foundress of the Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ), Marie Madeline was the pastoral care and education of youth, a task which we now take up.

Companionship is also central to the FCJ Philosophy of Education. These values can be found today in the mission statement of the school as follows;

- 1) Encourage academic success, promoting quality in everything we do.
- 2) Develop a well-rounded individual with a healthy physical, social and spiritual outlook on life.
- 3) Nurture a sense of respect and pride in each individual in the school and in the community.
- 4) Maintain a positive, caring and disciplined environment.
- 5) Provide a joyful educational experience for all.

The ethos of our school is founded on a respect for the dignity of each individual student and recognition of the unique gifts of each individual person. It is a multid denominational school with a Catholic Ethos. An inclusive environment in which Christian values are fostered has developed in St. Tiernan's School.

The school fosters the academic, social, moral and intellectual development of each boy and girl. The school recognises the multiple intelligences and are always ready to address the needs of our students.

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all school policies, practices and activities. Consequently, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools", the Board has agreed the following child protection policy:

- **The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification and Department's "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools" as its overall child protection policy**
- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mr Declan Hughes
- The Deputy Designated Liaison People (Deputy DLP's) are Mr Gerry McCooey and Mr Ken Cooke
- In its policies, practices and activities, St Tiernan's Community 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;
 - Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare
 - 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
- Ensure compliance with the Department's circulars and any other legal requirements in relation to Garda vetting of school personnel and other persons who have or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults.
- Provide relevant training and education to all school personnel and Board of Management members to ensure that they have the necessary familiarity with these procedures to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. It is envisaged that this will be achieved by the school developing a culture of awareness and knowledge of these procedures amongst all school personnel and, where appropriate, ensuring that external training is undertaken.

The Board will ensure that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items and will undertake an annual review of the school's child protection policy and its implementation.

Recognising Child Abuse

St Tiernan's Community School will endeavour to protect children from abuse or risk of abuse. Abuse can fall under the following four headings: neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and physical abuse. Please refer to the guidelines "Child Protection Guidelines for Primary and Post Primary Schools" for further information.

Copies of the "Child Protection Guidelines for Primary and Post Primary Schools" can be received from the DLP, DDLP and are available in the staffroom or www.education.ie

All members of staff are expected to be vigilant and report concerns immediately to the DLP or the DDLP.

St Tiernan's is a "telling" school where students are encouraged to report to staff any type of bullying or abuse they may be aware of. Students are also aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if it compromises that safety of a student. The safety and protection of students is a priority in all cases.

Care Team

The management of St Tiernan's Community School have in place a care team to help with the recognition and reporting of child abuse and to provide a support to children at risk of child abuse. This care team comprises of:

Deputy Designated Liaison People (DDLp): Mr Gerry McCooey (Deputy Principal) and Mr Ken Cooke (Guidance Counsellor)

Chaplain: Ms Sarah Redmond

Home School Community Liaison: Ms Patricia Flannery

School Completion Co-Ordinator: Mr Peter Lennon

Keeping Records

Where child abuse is suspected, staff members will make written record of all information available. This written record will include:

1. Date and Time
2. Place where disclosure was made/concern was raised
3. Facts pertaining to the case

Where possible, the students own words should be quoted in the report. No leading questions shall be asked. This written record will not contain any opinions or judgements and will be given to the DLP or DDLp. No attempt will be made by any member of staff to investigate the issue other than to establish if there are reasonable grounds for concern. Where the DLP or DDLp establish there are grounds for concern, the DLP will inform the HSE immediately through the Duty Social Worker. The parents will always be informed except where this may endanger a student further. In the event of an emergency, or where the HSE cannot be contacted, a report will be made to An Garda Siochana. The written record will be kept confidential at all times and stored in a safe place by the DLP/DDLp to protect the student involved.

Allegations made against Teachers

Where an allegation is made against a teacher or any other member of staff, it will be the responsibility of the School Principal to ensure that any complaint is thoroughly investigated, (protecting the rights of both the child and the employee). Where the complaint is against the Principal the BOM has this responsibility. For the safety and protection of teachers, any teacher/staff member who has an allegation made against them is encouraged to contact their trade union for support and advice. Teachers are also made aware of the Employee Assistance Service, Carecall, which offers a range of health services including counselling to teachers affected by these issues.

This policy is not a stand alone document but part of a whole school response to child protection. Other policies and guidelines which ensure the safety and protection of the child at all times include:

1. Code of Behaviour
2. Anti – bullying Policy
3. SPHE and RSE School Policy
4. Professional Codes and Best Practice Guidelines for Teachers as set out by the Teaching Council, ASTI/TUI and JMB

Ratification Date : 2012