

**Ramsgrange Community School**

**Child Protection Policy**

**Ratified March 2014**

**Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty and fairness in which all the school community can achieve their full potential.**

**Under the joint Patronage of Sisters of St. Louis**

**&**

**Waterford & Wexford Education and Training Board**

**Ramsgrange Community School, New Ross, Co. Wexford**

|  |
| --- |
| **Child Protection and School Protocol Policy** |

**\*This policy is adopted from DES Circular 0065/2011\***

**Section 1: Introduction**

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all 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 Ramsgrange Community School, New Ross, Co. Wexford 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 **Rachel O’Connor** (Principal).
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Tracey Edwards (Deputy Principal).
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Ramsgrange CS, New Ross, Co. Wexford 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.

1. The following is a list of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection:
   * Mission Statement
   * Anti-Bullying
   * The School Care Team
   * Internet Acceptable Use
   * Extra-curricular activity
   * Code of Behaviour
   * Class Tutor system
   * Meitheal system
   * Guidance
   * Substance misuse
   * Major Incidents procedures
   * Student attendance

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.

1. 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.
2. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

Formal training for all employees in child protection matters will be conducted in 2015/2016. All members of Staff were given a copy of Child Protection Guidelines and were asked to become familiar with same.

RCS complies with Circular 0063/2010 issued by the DES for the vetting of teaching and non-teaching staff in schools.

The Board also formally approved the protocol authorizing immediate action under section 5.2 of the “Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools” on

Date of next review: March 2016

|  |
| --- |
| **Section 2: Annual Review** |

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. It is adopted from DES Circular 0065/2011.

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.

* Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools? Y/N
* 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 School’? Y/N
* Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed? Y/N
* Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand? Y/N
* Has the DLP attended available child protection training? Y/N
* Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training? Y/N
* Have any members of the Board attended child protection training? Y/N
* Has the school’s child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance? Y/N
* Has the Board ensured that the Department’s ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’ are available to all school personnel? Y/N
* Have the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school’s child protection policy to new school personnel? Y/N
* 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? Y/N
* Since the Board’s last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP? Y/N
* 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? Y/N
* 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? Y/N
* Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes? Y/N
* Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely? Y/N
* Has the Board ensured that the Parents’ Association (if any), has been provided with the school’s child protection policy? Y/N
* Has the Board ensured that the school’s child protection policy is available to parents on request? Y/N
* Has the Board ensured that the SPHE curriculum is implemented in full in the school? Y/N
* Is the Board satisfied that the Department’s requirements for Garda Vetting have been met in respect of all school personnel (employees and volunteers)? Y/N
* Is the Board satisfied that the Department’s requirements in relation to the provision of a child protection related statutory declaration and associated form of undertaking have been met in respect of person appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions? Y/N
* Is the Board satisfied that, from a child protection perspective, thorough recruitment and selection procedures are applied by the school in relation to all school personnel (employees and volunteers)? Y/N
* Is the Board satisfied that the ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’ are being fully and adequately implemented by the school? Y/N
* Has the Board identified any aspects of the school’s child protection policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement? Y/N
* Has the Board put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the school’s child protection policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement? Y/N
* Has the Board ensured that any areas for improvement that were identified in any previous review of the school’s child protection policy have been adequately addresses? Y/N

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2015

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2015

Principal

|  |
| --- |
| **Notification regarding the Board of Management’s annual review of the Child Protection Policy** |

To: Ramsgrange Community School, New Ross, Co. Wexford Parents’ Association and Waterford & Wexford ETB

The Board of Management of Ramsgrange Community School, New Ross, Co. Wexford wishes to inform you that:

* The Board of Management’s annual review of the school’s child protection policy was completed at the Board meeting of Tuesday May 5th 2015.
* This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 2 of the Department’s ‘Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools’

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2015

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2015

Principal

|  |
| --- |
| **Section 3: Action Plan following (date) annual review:** |

The Principal and Deputy Principal will make arrangements to familiarise all staff with these new procedures, refresher training will be sought for August 2015 and will continue to do so at the beginning of every new school year heretofore.

The Board of Management will place Child Protection matters and the ongoing review of associated policy on the agenda at every future meeting of the Board.

|  |
| --- |
| **Section 4: Summary of procedures** |

What now follows is a summary of the main points contained in the Procedures as issued by the DES:

Forms of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

1. **Neglect** 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.

Symptoms of neglect include;

Inadequate supervision – where children have a lot of freedom they may be prey for those who will abuse;

Habitually dirty;

Seeming to be lethargic and lacking sleep;

Unhealthy appearance;

Inadequate clothing;

From conversation seem to be left alone for long periods or overnight;

Permitted to engage in adult/dangerous activities – consume alcohol, work long hours, drive cars underage.

1. **Emotional abuse** occurs when a child’s need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is normally to be found in the relationship between a caregiver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events.

Symptoms of emotional abuse include:

Over compliance;

Seeking attention/affection to an unusual extent;

Anger/resentment

Constant guardedness

Bullying or domineering relationship;

Victim role;

Running away from home.

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

Symptoms of Physical Abuse include:

Bruising, especially in unusual places which would not result from normal accidents; Grip marks/black eyes/burns.

1. **Sexual abuse** occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

Symptoms of Sexual Abuse include:

Speech or drawings which indicate children have inappropriate knowledge;

Victims experience distorted sexual development, carry a sense of stigma (feel different from peers in a negative way);

Experience a sense of betrayal where a abuser has been a ‘carer’;

Victims feel powerless – the result of abuser’s exercise of power in the course of the abuse and in enforcing secrecy.

|  |
| --- |
| **Responsibility to report child abuse** |

Every member of staff in Ramsgrange Community School, New Ross, Co. Wexford must be alert to the possibility that students with whom they are in contact may be being abused. The school will do everything possible to protect students from abuse or risk of abuse. Because they are in regular and frequent contact with students, members of school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse or to be aware of unexplained changes in behaviour or performance which may indicate abuse. All members of staff are asked to exercise vigilance in their observations of students so that important signs are not overlooked.

Any staff member with concerns about the safety of any student in his/her care should keep a written record of same and report them without delay to the Designated Liaison Person, Ms. Rachel O’Connor, (Principal). In her absence, the Deputy Principal, Ms. Tracey Edwards (Deputy Designated Liaison Person), should be contacted – in the absence of both DLP and DDLP the Person ‘Acting Up’ should be informed.

Students or parents should not be interviewed in detail about the suspected abuse. Under no circumstances should a student’s clothing be removed. Confidentially must never be promised to a person making a disclosure and the requirement to report to the Health Service Executive (HSE) must be explained in a supportive manner.

The Designated Liaison Person shall then decide whether or not reasonable grounds exist to report the case to the HSE.

The following examples would indicate reasonable grounds for concern:

* Specific indication from the student that she was abused.
* An account by a person who saw the student being abused.
* Evidence, such as injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and which is unlikely to be caused another way.

A suspicion that is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.

If a decision is made to report a case of suspected abuse, the Designated Liaison Person shall make personal contact with the Duty Social Worker in Ely House (053-9147718/9147719) to whom the Standard Reporting Form will be submitted. In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of health board staff, the report will be made to An Garda Síochána. The student’s parents will be informed by the Designated Liaison Person if a report is to be made to the HSE unless doing so is likely to endanger the student.

As soon as possible thereafter, the Designated Liaison Person will inform the BOM of such a report.

The school will keep detailed written records of all suspected cases of child abuse.

General points

* The school’s SPHE programme develops an .awareness among students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of child protection matters.
* Parents who have any concerns about the behaviour of a member of staff or about the safety of a child in the school should make their concerns known to the Designated Liaison Person. If the suspicion is regarding the Designated Liaison Person, parents should contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

|  |
| --- |
| **Section 5: School Protocols** |

The following protocols in relation to child protection were adopted by the BOM on Tuesday March 4th 2014 and will be reviewed in March 2015. They are for immediate implementation by all staff. These protocols form part of a wider school policy on child protection and vetting of school personnel.

**Dressing rooms**

It is the intention of the school that all students should be afforded privacy whilst using dressing rooms and shower areas. Where it appears that the well-being or safety of students require intervention by an adult, the Board of Management authorises such intervention which would, except in an emergency, be preceded by a vocal alert telling students that an adult is entering a dressing room after a brief period to allow students dress themselves to a level of decency. Where possible, such intervention should be by a female teacher in the female dressing rooms. A male teacher intervening in such a manner is required to be particularly prudent.

Any such interventions that are considered out of the ordinary should be recorded and reported to the Principal.

In the case of all-female matches, the first person into a dressing room must be a female teacher or female voluntary adult supervisor. She must also be the last to leave the dressing room.

Once a female teacher or female voluntary adult supervisor has checked the dressing room and ensured that all students are dressed to a level of decency, a male teacher may enter the dressing room to give a team talk.

**Matches**

Where possible, there must be two supervising teachers at all matches involving school teams, at least one of whom must be female if it is a female team that is playing. – please refer to Extra-Curricular/Sports Policy ratified by BOM IN 2013.

**One-to-one situations**

Male teachers in a one-to-one situation with female students, e.g. learning support, special examination centres, the male teacher must be visible at all times through an open door or a clear glass panel.

Where female teachers need to talk privately with an individual student, the teacher should be clearly visible to others at all times while the student can be afforded privacy.

**Trips out of school**

Where there are female students going on a trip there must be at least one female teacher on those trips – refer to Extra Curricular/Sports Policy ratified 2013.

**Exceptional emergency**

In cases of exceptional emergency, all teachers and voluntary adult supervisors are authorised by the Board of Management to do what must be done. Details of such emergency must be recorded and reported to the Principal immediately.

|  |
| --- |
| **Acceptance of Policy** |

In September 2013, all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as any voluntary adult supervisors, must sign a declaration stating that they have been provided with a copy of the school’s child protection and vetting policy and that they agree to be bound by the contents thereof. This practice will be repeated every third year or more frequently if policy changes in the intervening period.

**Implementation and review**

This updated policy will take effect from March 2014 and will be reviewed as necessary in light of any relevant legislative changes.

The policy will be placed on the school website and will be made available to all candidates when applying for a position in the school. All candidates will be expected to confirm in writing their acceptance of this policy. Candidates who fail to give such acceptance will not be considered for appointment to any position in this school.

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

Chairperson, Board of Management

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

Principal

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

Trustee Nominee

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

Trustee Nominee

A full ratification sheet will be signed every year.