



Scoil Bhríde

Crosshaven, Co. Cork

t: 021 483 1646 m: 086 772 6326

e: secretary@scoilbhridecrosshaven.ie

w: www.scoilbhridecrosshaven.ie

# Child Protection Policy 2021-22

## Scoil Bhríde

### Roll Number 13910N

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## **Introduction**

This policy recognised the commencement of all sections of Children First Act 2015, on 11 December 2017. All staff members of Scoil Bhríde and members of the board of management took an active role in revising the previous version of this policy as well as undertaking the training to familiarise themselves with the procedures outline below.

## **Relationship to School Ethos**

The school promotes positive home-school contacts, not only in relation to the welfare of children, but in relation to all aspects of school life. This policy is in keeping with the school ethos through the provision of a safe, secure and caring school environment and the furthering of positive home-school links. Scoil Bhríde is a girl's Primary School founded on the Presentation philosophy of Education and Catholic faith. We strive to proactively nurture and educate each child to her fullest potential and at every stage of her development. We believe in striking balance and we encourage the cultivation of strong relationships within the school and community.

## **What are the implications of this policy for Scoil Bhríde?**

### **Mandated Persons**

All teachers are now 'mandated persons'. There are two areas of responsibility which will apply to mandated persons in a primary school:

- Where a mandated person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of that a child:
  - has been harmed
  - is being harmed
  - is at risk of being harmed

He or she must report that knowledge, belief or suspicion, to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) as soon as practicable.

- Where a child believes that he or she:
  - has been harmed
  - is being harmed
  - is at risk of being harmed

and discloses that belief to a mandated person, the mandated person must report that disclosure to Tusla as soon as practicable.

### **Child Safeguarding Statement**

The Board of Management (BoM) of each school must produce a Child Safeguarding Statement on or before 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**Risk Assessment of potential harm to children**

The BoM of each school must produce a *Risk Assessment of all potential harm to children* on or before 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018, in conjunction with the *Child Safeguarding Statement*. (Revisited April 2019)

**Child Protection Oversight Report**

A new child Protection Oversight Report must be provided to the BoM as part of the Principal's Report at every meeting - to ensure oversight by the BoM of the school's compliance with child safeguarding requirements.

The following templates are available below. These can be customised to your school.

9. Scoil Bhríde Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment.
10. Scoil Bhríde Child Safeguarding Statement
11. Scoil Bhríde Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement
12. Notification regarding the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde's review of the Child Safeguarding Statement.

# 1. Scoil Bhríde

## Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment (of any potential harm)

List of School Activities	Risk Level	The School has identified the following Risk of Harm	The School has the following Procedures in place to address identified risks
Training of school personnel in Child Protection matters	High	Harm not recognised or reported promptly	<p>Child Safeguarding Statement &amp; DES procedures made available to all staff.</p> <p>DLP&amp; DDLP to attend PDST face to face training All Staff to view Túsla training module &amp; any other online training offered by PDST</p> <p>BOM accounts for all staff and board training</p> <p>Annual Review of Policy and provide training to all staff regularly.</p>
One to one teaching	Med	Harm by school personnel	School has policy in place for one to one teaching. Open doors. Table between teacher and pupil Glass in window of doors. Teacher in view via window.
Care of Children with special needs, including intimate care needs	High	Harm by school personnel	SNA Policy. Principal to coordinate regular training for staff involved. BOM and Principal to aid the providing of Personal Intervention training. Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures made available to all staff.
Toilet areas	High	Inappropriate behaviour	Code of Behaviour and Supervision policy. All staff and substitute staff to be regularly made aware of arrangements.
Curricular Provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay safe.	Med	Non-teaching of same. Outside facilitators	Scoil Bhríde implements SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe in full as per Scoil Bhríde SPHE Plan. Principal responsible for Policy area. Training to be coordinated by Principal. All outside facilitators to provide Garda Vetting a per Visitors and Volunteers Policy.

LGBT Children/Pupils perceived to be LGBT	Med	Bullying by students	Anti-Bullying Policy. Code of Behaviour. Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures made available to all staff. SPHE lessons. Training to be organised where necessary.
Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils	Med	Harm from older pupils, unknown adults on the way in or out of school grounds. Traffic concerns	Arrival and dismissal supervised by Teachers+SNAs. Consistent reminder to school community re local collection arrangements. Site monitoring via CCTV (Scoil Bhríde CCTV Policy).
Managing of challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use of restraint	High	Injury to pupils and staff	SNA Policy. Health & Safety Policy. Code of Behaviour. Board of Management to coordinate with Principal re appropriate personal intervention training, leading to a formal policy
Sports Coaches	Med	Harm to pupils	Visitors and Volunteers Policy & Procedures in place. (eg Garda Vetting, references where required)
Students participating in work experience	Low	Harm to student. Harm not recognised or reported promptly.	Visitors and Volunteers Policy & Procedures in place. DP supervises timetable. Child Safeguarding Statement.
Recreation breaks for pupils	High	Harm by students	Code of Behaviour. Adequate supervision at all times. Plan for substitution when teachers/SNAs are absent.
Classroom teaching	Low	Harm by student/teacher/non school personnel	Code of behaviour. Adequate supervision at all times. Principal ensures teachers are appropriately qualified and fully aware of school procedures. Child Safeguarding statement.
Outdoor teaching activities	Med	Harm by students/facilitators	All activities must be sanctioned by Principal. Health and Safety policy. Supervision Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Record Keeping/Incident Reports. Child Safeguarding statement.
Sporting Activities	Low	Harm by Student/facilitators	All activities must be sanctioned by Principal. Health and Safety policy. Supervision Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Record Keeping/Incident Reports. Child Safeguarding statement.

Homework Club/Breakfast Club (potential future initiative)	Low	Harm by students/teachers/non-school personnel.	All activities must be sanctioned by BOM. Health and Safety policy. Supervision Policy. Hire of School Facilities Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Principal ensures of adequate insurance provision. Child Safeguarding statement.
Secondary School Pupils visiting the grounds of Scoil Bhríde	Low	Harm by secondary school students/non-school personnel	All activities must be sanctioned by BOM. Health and Safety policy. Supervision Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Principal insures of adequate insurance provision. Child Safeguarding statement.
School outings	Med	Harm by student/teacher/facilitator	All activities must be sanctioned by Principal. Health and Safety policy. Supervision Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Record Keeping/Incident Reports. Child Safeguarding statement. A copy of outing venue's insurance/safety policy may be acquired in advance. Teachers MUST stay with groups.
School trips involving foreign travel/overnight stay (potential future initiative)	High	Harm by student/teacher/facilitator	All activities must be sanctioned by Board of Management. Health and Safety policy. Supervision Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Child Safeguarding statement. A copy of outing venue's insurance/safety policy may be acquired in advance.
School trips to adjoining Secondary School	Low	Harm by secondary student/teacher/non-school personnel	All activities must be sanctioned by the Principal. Health and Safety policy. Supervision Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Child Safeguarding statement.
Use of toilet as changing area in schools	High	Harm by student/teacher/non-school personnel	Code of Behaviour and Supervision policy. Health and safety Statement. All staff and substitute staff to be regularly made aware of arrangements. Child Safeguarding statement.
Annual Sports Day	Low	Harm by student/teacher/non-school personnel	All activities must be sanctioned by Principal. Health and Safety policy. Visitors and Volunteer's Policy.

			Garda Vetting. Supervision Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Child Safeguarding statement.
Fundraising events involving pupils	Low	Harm by students/parents/non-school personnel	All activities must be sanctioned by Principal and/or BOM. Ensure those involved with helping the school are Garda Vetted and fully aware of school procedures. Child Safeguarding statement.
School transport arrangements including use of bus escorts (potential future initiative)	Med	Harm by students/parents/non-school personnel,	Supervision Policy. Health and Safety Policy. Auxiliary Staff/SNA policy. Adequate supervision at all times. Principal ensures employees of Scoil Bhríde are appropriately qualified and fully aware of school procedures. Child Safeguarding statement.
Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use of restraint where required	High	Harm by students/teachers/SNAs	SNA Policy. Principal to coordinate regular training/policy updates for staff involved. BOM and Principal to aid the providing of Personal Intervention training to all staff. Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures made available to all staff.
Administration of Medicine	Low	Harm to self	SNA Policy. Administration of Medicine Policy. Principal to coordinate regular training for staff involved. Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures made available to all staff.
Administration of First Aid	Low	Harm by teachers/SNAs/non-school personnel	Health and Safety Policy. Administration of First Aid Policy. Supervision Policy. Keeping records. Principal providing regular training. SNA Policy. Child Safeguarding Statement & school procedures made available to all staff/substitutes.
Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils	Low	Harm by students/teachers. Failure to recognise and report promptly.	Code of Behaviour. Anti-Bullying Policy (children). Keeping records. SNA Policy. Principal providing regular updates on procedures to all staff members. BOM mandatorily completing a report at each meeting. Principal to review policy/provide training. Child Safeguarding Statement & school procedures made available to all staff/substitutes.
Use of external personnel to supplement curriculum	Low	Harm by students/teachers/ non-school personnel. Failure to follow procedures	Visitors and Volunteer's Policy. Supervision Policy. Garda Vetting. Visitors Log. Principal providing

		before they commence (eg Garda Vetting/Insurance Cert)	regular updates on/reviews of procedures to all staff members. Child Safeguarding Statement & school procedures made available to all staff/substitutes.
<p>Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/needs such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants</li> <li>• Members of the Traveller community</li> <li>• Pupils of minority religious faiths</li> <li>• Children in care</li> <li>• Children on CPNS</li> </ul>	Med	Harm by students/teachers/ non-school personnel	Code of Behaviour. Supervision Policy. SEN Policy. SPHE Policy. Anti-Bullying Policy. Principal providing regular updates on/reviews of procedures to all staff members. Child Safeguarding Statement & school procedures made available to all staff/substitutes.
Use of school premises by other organisation during school day	Low	Harm by non-school personnel	All activities must be sanctioned by BOM. Health and Safety policy. Supervision Policy. Hire of School Facilities Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Principal ensures adequate independent insurance provision. Child Safeguarding statement.
Use of Digital Technology by pupils in school	Low	Harm by students/non-school personnel	ICT policy. Anti-Bullying Policy (including anti-Cyber Bullying Policy). Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy. Acceptable Usage Policy. Code of Behaviour. Health and Safety policy. Supervision Policy. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Child Safeguarding statement.
<p>Recruitment of school personnel including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• SNA's</li> <li>• Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners</li> <li>• Sports coaches</li> <li>• External Tutors/Guest Speakers</li> <li>• Volunteers/Parents in school activities</li> </ul>	Low	Harm not recognised/properly or promptly reported	Board of Management handbook. Board of Management training. Garda Vetting Policy. Visitors and Volunteer' Policy. Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures made available to all staff. Staff to view Tusla training module & any other online training offered by PDST. All activities must be sanctioned by BOM. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors/contractors present in school during school hours</li> <li>• Visitors/contractors present during after school activities</li> </ul>			procedures. Principal insures of adequate insurance provision. Child Safeguarding statement.
Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour including detention of pupils, confiscation of phones etc.	Low	Harm to students/reputation of school	Code of Behaviour. Supervision Policy. Electronic Devices and Mobile Phone Policy. Anti-bullying Policy (Children). Record Keeping. All actions must be sanctioned by BOM. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. BOM ensures all mandatory items are completed on the agenda for each meeting. Child Safeguarding statement.
Use of video/photography/other media to record school events	Low	Harm to students/reputation of school/by non-school community members	Acceptable Usage Policy. Enrolment Policy. Digital Technology and Social Media Policy. Supervision Policy. Anti-bullying Policy (Children). Record Keeping. All actions must be sanctioned by BOM. Principal ensures teachers/ancillary staff are fully aware of school procedures. Child Safeguarding statement.

**Important Note:** It should be noted that risk in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of 'harm' as defined in the *Children First Act 2015* and not general health and safety risk. The definition of harm is set out in Chapter 4 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools 2017*.

In undertaking this risk assessment, the Board of Management has endeavoured to identify as far as possible the risks of harm that are relevant to this school and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage all risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, the school has in place the procedures listed in this risk assessment to manage and reduce risk to the greatest possible extent. This policy is also strongly linked with the Scoil Bhríde Safety Policy.

This risk assessment has been completed/ratified by the Board of Management on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021. It will be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson of BoM 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal/Secretary to the BOM 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021



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w: [www.scoilbhridecrosshaven.ie](http://www.scoilbhridecrosshaven.ie)

## **Scoil Bhríde Child Safeguarding Statement**

Scoil Bhríde Crosshaven is an all-girl's Primary School providing Primary Education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

In accordance with the requirements of the *Children First Act 2015*, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*, the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017* and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

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 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is: Séamus O Connor (School Principal)
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is: Miriam Long (Deputy Principal)

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, procedures, practices and activities. This policy is also strongly linked with the Scoil Bhríde Safety Policy. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

Scoil Bhríde will:

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations
- fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children
- 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.

The following procedures/measures are in place:

- In relation to any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child attending the school, the school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the DES website.
- In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, the school adheres to the statutory vetting requirements of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 and to the wider duty of care guidance set out in relevant Garda Vetting and recruitment circulars published by the DES and available on the DES website.
- In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to staff in respect of the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) Scoil Bhríde will:
  - Provide each member of staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
  - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
  - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
  - Encourages BoM members to avail of relevant training
  - The BoM maintains records of all staff and Board member training
- In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.
- In this school the Board has appointed the above named DLP as the 'relevant person' (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the school's child safeguarding statement.
- All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.
- In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, the BoM has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the school or participating in school activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the school's procedures for managing those risks is attached as an appendix to these procedures.

- The various procedures referred to in this statement can be accessed via the school's website, the DES website or will be made available on request by the school.

**Note:** The above is not intended as an exhaustive list. Individual BoMs shall also include in this section such other procedures/measures that are of relevance to the school in question.

This statement has been published on the school's website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parents' Association and the patron. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this statement will be made available to Tusla and the Department if requested.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson of BoM 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal/Secretary to the BoM 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## **Checklist for Reviewing the Scoil Bhríde Child Safeguarding Statement**

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* require the Board of Management (BoM) to undertake a review of its Child Safeguarding Statement and that the following checklist shall be used for this purpose. The review must be completed every year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the Child Safeguarding Statement refers. Undertaking an annual review will also ensure that a school also meets its statutory obligation under section 11(8) of the *Children First Act 2015*, to review its Child Safeguarding Statement every two years.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list of the issues to be considered. Individual BoM shall include other items in the checklist that are of relevance to the school in question.

As part of the overall review process, BoM should also assess relevant school policies, procedures, 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 Safeguarding Statement, the *Children First Act 2015* and the *Child Protection Procedures Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.

	<b>Yes/No</b>
1. Has the BoM formally adopted a Child Safeguarding Statement in accordance with the ' <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017</i> '?	Y
2. As part of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement, has the BoM formally adopted, without modification, the ' <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017</i> '?	Y
3. Does the school's Child Safeguarding Statement include a written assessment of risk as required under the Children First Act 2015?	Y
4. Has the Board reviewed and updated where necessary the written assessment of risk as part of this overall review?	Y
5. Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	Y
6. Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	Y
7. Have any members of the BoM attended child protection training?	Y

8. Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	Y
9. Are the relevant contact details (Tusla and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	Y
10. Has the BoM arrangements in place to communicate the school's Child Safeguarding Statement to new school personnel?	Y
11. Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the ' <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017</i> ' and the Children First Act 2015?	Y
12. Has the BoM received a Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report at each Board meeting held since the last review was undertaken?	Y
13. Since the BoMs last review, was the BoM informed of any child protection reports made to Tusla/An Garda Síochána by the DLP?	Y
14. Since the BoMs last review, was the BoM informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from Tusla/and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made?	Y
15. Since the BoMs last review, was the BoM informed of any cases where an allegation of abuse or neglect was made against any member of school personnel?	N
16. Has the BoM been provided with and reviewed all documents relevant to the Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report?	Y
17. Is the BoM satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to Tusla/An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed in each case reviewed?	Y

18. Is the BoM satisfied that, since the last review, all appropriate actions are being or have been taken in respect of any member of school personnel against whom an allegation of abuse or neglect has been made?*	Y
19. Were child protection matters reported to the BoM appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	Y
20. Is the BoM satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	Y
21. Has the BoM been notified by any parent in relation to that parent not receiving the standard notification required under section 5.6 of the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017'?	Y
22. In relation to any cases identified at question 21 above, has the BoM ensured that any notifications required section 5.6 of the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017' were subsequently issued by the DLP?	Y
23. Has the BoM ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), has been provided with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	Y
24. Has the BoM ensured that the patron has been provided with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	Y
25. Has the BoM ensured that the school's Child Safeguarding Statement is available to parents on request?	Y
26. Has the BoM ensured that the Stay Safe programme is implemented in full in the school? (applies to primary schools)	Y
27. Has the Board ensured that the SPHE curriculum is implemented in full in the school?	Y

28. Is the BoM satisfied that the statutory requirements for Garda Vetting have been met in respect of all school personnel (employees and volunteers)? *	
29. Is the BoM 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 persons appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions?	Y
30. Is the BoM 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
31. Has the BoM considered and addressed any complaints or suggestions for improvements regarding the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	Y
32. Has the BoM sought the feedback of parents in relation to the school's compliance with the requirements of the child safeguarding requirements of the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017'?	Y
33. Has the BoM sought the feedback of pupils in relation to the school's child safeguarding arrangements?	Y
34. Is the BoM satisfied that the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017' are being fully and adequately implemented by the school?	Y
35. Has the BoM identified any aspects of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	N
36. Has the BoM put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the school's Child Safeguarding	N



Statement and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement?	
37. Has the BoM ensured that any areas for improvement that that were identified in any previous review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement have been adequately addressed?	Y

\*In schools where the ETB, is the employer the responsibility for meeting the employer's requirements rests with the ETB concerned. In such cases, this question should be completed following consultation with the ETB.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson of BoM 24/3/2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal/Secretary to the BoM 24/3/2021

**Notification Regarding the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde's  
Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement**

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management (BoM) of \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement was completed at the Board meeting on [Insert Date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the 'Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement' published on the Department's website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson of BoM [Insert Date]

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal/Secretary to the BoM [Insert Date]

## **Reasonable Grounds for Concern/Threshold of Harm**

The Reasonable Grounds for Concern are:

### **Neglect**

The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child's needs have been neglected, are being neglected, or are at risk of being neglected to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

### **Emotional Abuse/Ill-Treatment**

The threshold of harm at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

### **Physical Abuse**

The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being assaulted and that as a result the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

**Sexual Abuse**

If as a mandated person, you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being sexually abused, then you must report this to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015. As all sexual abuse falls within the category of seriously affecting a child's health, welfare or development, you must submit all concerns about sexual abuse as a mandated person to Tusla.

There is one exception, which deals with underage consensual sexual activity between teenagers who are between 15 and 17 years of age [See Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Guidance of Children, P23]. This is unlikely to apply to Primary Schools.

## **Scoil Bhríde Crosshaven**

### **Child Protection Reporting Procedures for DLP**

- DLP receives report of a child protection concern
- DLP checks with Children First Guidelines for initial clarification regarding the nature of the concern
- DLP records the report – date/time/context. Child’s registration number is used for recording purposes
- DLP makes informed decision on how to proceed based on information received and the urgency of the situation presented.
- DLP informs Chairperson of Board of Management that initial contact is being made with Tusla for advice if appropriate.
- DLP makes contact with Tusla seeking advice (Do not give name of child at this point. Be very clear that you are seeking advice). Take the name of the person you spoke to and record conversation
- Duty Social Worker makes recommendation. This may involve school continuing to monitor the situation in school. Record this decision and send written record of this decision to Tusla. Alternatively a formal referral made on standard reporting form may be recommended by Social Worker (Keep a copy of completed form on file in a secure place)
- If Tusla is not available for advice/ referral and case warrants immediate response – Gardaí are informed
- Decision must be made on informing/not informing parents - taking safety of the child into consideration as number one priority. A decision NOT to inform parent/s should only be made where there is a genuine concern for the safety of the child. Be transparent with parent/s and ensure that they are aware that you have a non-negotiable responsibility as DLP to act in the best interests of the child (Refer to Children First)
- If DLP decides not to contact Tusla in relation to the case – person who made original report must be informed of this decision in writing
- Continued monitoring of child should be recommended
- The number of Child Protection concerns that have been discussed/ reported to Tusla should be included in the Principal’s Report to Board of Management Meeting – Children’s names must never be used.
- Referral Form - <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

**IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:**

- **Chairperson BoM: 086 1744561**
- **Tusla: 021 4923001 (ask for the Duty Social Worker)**
- **Gardaí : Gerard O'Callaghan – 086 8501592**

## Summary of Record Keeping Requirements

The section references below relate to '*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*' and summarise the main record-keeping requirements set out in those procedures as follows:

**Section 3.4** sets out requirements on individual members of the Scoil Bhríde staff to record child protection concerns that they may have, including disclosures from children and any actions taken in respect of same

**Section 5.1.1** requires that the DLP (School Principal) shall make a written record of any concern brought to his or her attention by a member of the school staff and will place this record in a secure location

**Section 5.3.3** requires that in all cases where the DLP has sought the advice of Tusla, the DLP will retain a record of the consultation which will note the date, the name of the Tusla official and the advice given

**Section 3.4.4** requires that the DLP shall retain a copy of every report submitted by him or her to Tusla and shall keep a record of any further actions taken by the DLP and of any further communications with Tusla, An Garda Síochana or other parties in relation to that report

**Section 3.4.5** requires that all records created shall be regarded as highly confidential and placed in a secure location

**Section 3.4.6** requires that to allow for the effective recording and tracking of relevant records and actions, child protection case files and any parties referenced in such files shall be assigned a unique code or serial number by the DLP. In this context 'parties' means any party whose identity, if disclosed, might lead to the identification of a child or a person against whom an allegation has been made

**Section 9.4** requires that a Child Protection Oversight Report must be provided to the Board of Management (BoM), as part of the principal's report to the board, at every BoM meeting. The information that will be provided in this report is set out at sections 9.5 to 9.8 of these procedures

**Sections 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7** provide that the minutes of BoM meetings will record child protection matters by reference to the unique code or serial number assigned to the case/parties concerned

**Section 5.3.6** requires that where the DLP informs a parent/carer that a report concerning his or her child is being made, a record will be made of the information communicated by the DLP to the parent/carer. It also requires that a decision by the DLP not to inform a parent/carer shall be recorded together with the reasons for not doing so

**Section 5.3.8** requires that if the DLP decides that the concern of the member of school personnel, including that of a mandated person should not be reported to Tusla, the DLP shall give the member of the school staff a clear statement, in writing, as to the reasons why action is not being taken. A copy of this statement shall be retained by the DLP. Where that member of the school staff decides to make a report to Tusla, he or she must provide the DLP with a copy of that report

**Section 5.6** requires that where the DLP issues a notification to a parent in accordance with that section, a copy of that notification shall be retained by the DLP

**Section 3.5.4** requires the BoM to ensure that arrangements are in place to ensure that the DDLP can access relevant records when required

**Section 8.1 3.6** requires that records of the annual review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and its outcome shall be retained and made available, if requested, to the patron and/or the Department.

The above is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the record keeping requirements in these procedures and school personnel should ensure that records are maintained in line with the requirements set out in these procedures.

## **Protected Disclosure Policy**

### **Scoil Bhríde**

### **Roll Number 13910N**

#### **What is a Protected Disclosure?**

“A protected disclosure means disclosure of relevant information, which in the reasonable belief of the worker, tends to show one or more **relevant wrongdoings** and which came to the attention of the worker in connection with his/her employment”.

In making a disclosure a worker must reasonably believe the information disclosed to be substantially true. No worker will be penalised simply by getting it wrong so long as the worker had a reasonable belief that the information disclosed shows, or tends to show, wrongdoing.

#### **The Protected Disclosures (Whistle-blowers) Act 2014:**

The above Act came into effect on the 16th of July 2014. Schools are required to put a Protected Disclosure policy in place which meets the requirements of the Act. The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde Crosshaven. takes the issue of wrongdoing seriously and as a result has drafted this policy.

#### **Links to Other Scoil Bhríde Policies**

- Child Protection and Safe Guarding.
- Data Protection and Record Keeping.
- Anti-Bullying (Adult).
- Safety Statement.
- Parental and Staff Grievance Procedures



- Acceptable Usage Policy

### **What are “*Relevant Wrongdoings*”?**

*Relevant Wrongdoings* include but are not limited to the following:

- The commission of an offence.
- Non-compliance with a legal obligation
- Danger to Health & Safety of an individual.
- Improper use of public funds.

The relevant wrongdoings may already have taken place, be happening or be likely to happen.

### **Who is a *Worker* as far as a school is concerned?**

- All current and former employees (including permanent, temporary, fixed-term, casual and substitute);
- Contractors and consultants engaged to carry out work or services for the school;
- Agency workers;
- Individuals on work experience pursuant to a training course and trainees of/with the school.

### **To whom do you make the Disclosure?**

The vast majority of disclosures should be made, orally or in writing, to the school Principal or to the Chairperson of the Board of Management (BOM). Where this is inappropriate or impossible there is provided a list of “*Prescribed Persons*”. In relation to schools the Prescribed Person is the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

### **What protections are available to whistle blowers (Disclosers)?**

Among the protections are:

- Protection from dismissal.
- Up to 5 years’ remuneration for unfair dismissal.
- Protection of identity (subject to certain exceptions)
- Protection from penalisation by the school Board of Management.

**What is best practice?**

If you as a member of staff have a genuine or reasonable concern that there is wrongdoing in the school you should report it to the Principal. If this is not appropriate or possible you should then report it to the Chairperson of the BOM. Workplace grievances should be reported in the normal manner and are not covered by this policy. It should be noted that while internal reporting is encouraged you have the option to raise concerns outside of the school's Board of Management and report to the Secretary General of the DES.

**Confidentiality:**

Scoil Bhríde is committed to protecting the identity of the worker making a protected disclosure and ensuring that protected disclosures are treated in confidence. However, there are circumstances, as outlined in the 2014 Act, where confidentiality cannot be maintained, for example, where the Discloser makes it clear that he/ she has no objection to his or her identity being disclosed and/or the identity of the Discloser is critical to an investigation of the matter raised. If it is decided that confidentiality cannot be maintained in the context of an investigation, the school will inform the Discloser in advance that his /her identity will be disclosed.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2022.

**Ratification**

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**Chairperson**