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Coláiste Gleann Lí

*Clash Road,
Tralee, Co. Kerry.
066 71 22552*

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Child Protection Policy

Office Hours

10am – 12pm

2pm – 3.30pm



BORD OIDEACHAIS
AGUS OILIÚNA CHIARRAÍ
KERRY EDUCATION
AND TRAINING BOARD

School Manager

Mr. Richard Lawlor

Coláiste Gleann Lí

Child Protection Policy

Agreed procedures for reporting allegations/suspicious of child abuse.

The Board of Management of Coláiste Gleann Lí recognises that Child Protection and Welfare permeates 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 DoES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011, the Board of Management of Coláiste Gleann Lí has agreed the following Child Protection Policy.

The procedures will apply with immediate effect to both primary and post-primary schools and will replace previous guidelines issued in 2001 and 2004 respectively.

The Board of Management of Coláiste Gleann Lí has carefully considered the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of its overall Child Protection Policy.

This policy must be reviewed annually.

The Designated Liaison Person is Richard Lawlor.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Myrna Egan.

In its policies, practices and activities Coláiste Gleann Lí will adhere to the following principals 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 possibilities of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave them open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
- Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to learners with special vulnerability

The following school policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to Child Protection

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance and Participation Strategy

- SPHE/RSE Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy, (Computer)
- Critical Incident Policy

A copy of the College's child protection policy which includes the names of the DLP and Deputy DLP shall be made available to all school personnel and the Parents Association and must be readily accessible to parents on request.

The Child Protection policy of Coláiste Gleann Lí shall be formally adopted by the Board of Management. A copy of the school's Child Protection policy shall be provided to the DoES inspectorate and Kerry ETB if requested.

The Role of Staff

All staff (teachers, SNA's, Ancillary Staff, Secretarial, Caretaking, etc...) in Coláiste Gleann Lí will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns and disclosures as outlined below (as per the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011)

The Staff and Board of Management have identified the following areas of specific concerns in relation to Child Protection. Following discussion and consultation the Staff and Board of Management have agreed that the following practices be adopted.

- Physical Contact is avoided
- Teachers must be present where possible when visitors/guest speakers are in the school/classroom.
- Learners with specific toileting/intimate care needs where a child has intimate care needs, written procedures/agreements must be in place, signed and agreed by both parents and SNA.
- In the event of toileting accidents of students where procedures/agreements are not in place the parents will be contacted; if they are not contactable, emergency numbers are rung and parents arrange someone to take care of the child.
- One to one teaching takes place with high visibility in a room with glass panel in door and blinds open, sitting on opposite side of a desk.
- First year and second year students are not allowed leave the school building at lunch time except to attend lunch time clubs and only with the permission of the parent/guardian.
- Changing for PE/Swimming: Students are accompanied to PE class by the PE teacher and SNA/s attached to the year group. Students will change in the Sports Complex changing area but only under the direction of the teachers and or SNA/s. When students are swimming a male teacher/SNA will supervise the male changing area and a female teacher/SNA will supervise the female changing area. Children should not be allowed to change in these dressing rooms in pairs or on their own.
- If students wish to avail of the lunch time sports clubs in the Sports Complex parental permission is required as direct supervision of the changing areas is not possible. The sporting activities are supervised.
- All new staff must be vetted. Vetting should be reviewed every two/three years.
- Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, school rules and positive encouragement will all be enforced by staff.

- Learners must be supervised at all times; in classrooms and at break time.
- Permission is sought on enrolment in relation to children's photos being taken, displayed on school website or on any school literature and in relation to Acceptable Use Policy.

The Duty of the Board of Management

- A review of the school's child protection Policy will be conducted annually by the Board of Management.
- As part of the annual review of the school's child protection policy, the Board of Management must specifically review the school's implementation of the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'. A checklist shall be used as an aid to conducting the annual review. See Appendix. The Board of Management may add other items to this checklist that are of particular relevance to the different situations in questions.
- Following the review, the Coláiste Gleann Lí authority shall put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review and arrange for these to be dealt with as quickly as possible.
- Written notification that the review has been undertaken shall be provided to the Parents Association. A record of the review and its outcomes shall be made available, if requested, to the patron and/or the Department.

Curricular Provisions and Child Abuse Prevention

- It is the responsibility of the Coláiste Gleann Lí to contribute to the prevention of child abuse and neglect through curricular provisions. In that context the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme is a mandatory part of the curriculum for all students in Coláiste Gleann Lí.
- RSE is provided in Coláiste Gleann Lí for all students. Certain topics of the RSE Curriculum are covered in the SPHE programme. Parents can decide to opt out of this talk if they wish but they must understand that the onus is completely on them to deliver this information to their children.
- Coláiste Gleann Lí will fully implement the SPHE/RSE programme in order to help children to develop the skills necessary to enable them to recognise and resist abuse and potentially abusive situations. The SPHE/RSE Curriculum is compulsory for all learners attending Coláiste Gleann Lí unless written instruction to exempt them is received from parent/guardian.

Recruitment procedures and requirements for Garda vetting

Coláiste Gleann Lí will ensure compliance with the Departments 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.

- Whether a person is being considered for employment or other roles within Coláiste Gleann Lí comprehensive procedures for the checking of the person's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults are essential element of child protection practice.
- Vetting will not take the place of normal recruitment procedures and thorough recruitment procedures which are an essential element of good child protection will be practiced. Vetting

will be used as part of those procedures. These will apply to all those being employed in the school, be it on a teaching or non-teaching basis.

- The Board of Management of Coláiste Gleann Lí knows that effective child protection depends on the skills, knowledge and values of personnel working with children and families, as well as co-operation between agencies (interagency) and within agencies (intra-agency). The Board of Management of the school will ensure that all school personnel and Board of Management members have the necessary familiarity with these procedures to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities therein.

Confidentiality

- All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse and neglect should be shared only on a 'need to know' basis in the interest of the learner. If the person has no legitimate involvement or role in dealing with the issue then this information will not be shared. This information will at all times be confidential and will not be given to a third party who imparts information
- If or when the Designated Liaison Person is submitting a report to the HSE or An Garda Síochána they will inform a parent/carer unless doing so is likely to endanger the learner or place the learner at further risk. A record shall be made of the information communicated to the parent/carer by means of a meeting.
- Any sensitive child protection information that is recorded in relation to any learner is stored carefully and safely in a locked filing cabinet in the office. The information will always be kept in a sealed envelope and the learner's name will not be written on this envelope. The learner will only be identifiable through a number.
- A decision not to inform a parent/carer shall be briefly recorded together with the reasons for not doing so. This record shall be made and retained by the DLP. In cases where school personnel have concerns about a child, but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person shall seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.
- It is a matter for the HSE to assess and investigate suspected abuse and neglect and determine what action to take, including informing An Garda Síochána.
- In addition to informing the school authority of those cases where a report involving a child in the school has been submitted to the HSE, the DLP shall also inform the school authority of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made. At each Board of Management meeting the principal's report will include the number of all such cases and this will be recorded in the minutes of the board meeting.
- In cases of emergency, where a learner appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and it is not possible to make contact with HSE, An Garda Síochána shall be contacted immediately. Under no circumstances should a learner be left in a dangerous situation pending HSE intervention.

Qualified Privilege

- Qualified Privilege arises where the person making the communication has a duty to do so, or right, or interest to protect the child and where the communication is made to a person with

similar duty, right or interest. The person making the report, acting in loco parentis, would be expected to act in the child's best interests and in making the report would be regarded as acting in such a manner.

- Privilege can be displayed only where it can be established that the person making the report acted maliciously. Furthermore, those reporting a child's disclosure or concerns about a child's behaviour or welfare are not regarded as making an allegation as a matter of charge, but simply carrying out their duty in good faith. They are not accusing or bringing a charge.

Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse.

These are: -

1. Considering the possibility
2. Looking out for signs of abuse
3. Recording of information

Categories of Abuse

Child Abuse can be categorised into four types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time.

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, and/or medical care.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point.

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Examples of emotional abuse of children include:

- (a) the imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- (b) conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
- (c) emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer;
- (d) unresponsiveness of parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- (e) premature imposition of responsibility on the child;

- (f) unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way;
- (g) under- or over-protection of the child;
- (h) failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- (i) use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- (j) exposure to domestic violence;
- (k) exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology.

Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, non-organic failure to thrive, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

Physical abuse can involve:

- (a) severe physical punishment;
- (b) beating, slapping, hitting or kicking;
- (c) pushing, shaking or throwing;
- (d) pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
- (e) terrorising with threats;
- (f) observing violence;
- (g) use of excessive force in handling;
- (h) deliberate poisoning;
- (i) suffocation;
- (j) fabricated/induced illness allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- (a) exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;
- (b) intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- (c) masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- (d) sexual intercourse with the child whether oral, vaginal, or anal;
- (e) sexual exploitation of a child includes inciting, encouraging propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means

(f) It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the “grooming” process by perpetrators of abuse;

(g) consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation.

In all cases where a school becomes aware of underage sexual intercourse the school should take appropriate steps to inform the child’s parents.

Cases of underage pregnancy/sexual activity Designated Liaison Person for the school should seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Services as this may be indicative of Child Abuse.

Signs and symptoms of child abuse

Child neglect or abuse can often be difficult to identify and may present in many forms. A list of indicators of child abuse is outlined in Appendix 3 of these procedures. No one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse. It may indicate conditions other than child abuse. All signs and symptoms must be examined in the total context of the child’s situation and family circumstances.

Children with additional vulnerabilities

Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. These include children with disabilities, children who are homeless and those who, for one reason or another, are separated from parents or other family members and who depend on others for their care and protection. The same categories of abuse – neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse – are applicable, but may take a slightly different form.

Where a person has concerns regarding a vulnerable adult learner, the advice of the HSE or, if necessary, An Garda Síochána should be sought.

Responsibilities of all School Personnel

There is an obligation on Coláiste Gleann Lí to provide learners with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their wellbeing and protect them from harm.

In situations where school personnel suspect that a child may have been abused or neglected, or is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, they shall ensure that such concerns are reported in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

Designated Liaison Person

The DLP of Coláiste Gleann Lí is Richard Lawlor Deputy Principal. In the absence of the DLP the Deputy DLP Ms Myrna Egan, will always ensure that the Deputy DLP can access relevant records as required.

The name of the DLP shall be displayed in a prominent position near the main entrance to the school.

The DLP will act as a liaison with outside agencies and as a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns. As a resource person, the DLP shall ensure that he/she is knowledgeable about child protection and undertakes any training considered necessary to keep him/her updated on new developments.

This person will be the designated liaison person for the school in dealing with the HSE, An Garda Síochána and other parties, in connection with allegations of and/or concerns about child abuse and neglect. Those other parties shall be advised that they shall conduct all matters pertaining to the processing or assessment/investigation of alleged child abuse through the DLP.

Principal's report to the Board of Management

At each Board of Management meeting the principal's report shall:

- (a) state the number of reports made to the HSE by the DLP, since the last Board of Management meeting and
- (b) state the number of cases, since the last Board meeting, where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made, or
- (c) where there were no such cases at (a) or (b) above, state this fact.

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting shall record the above.

Note: The Principal's report shall state only the number of cases at (a) and (b) and shall not include any other details of these cases.

Recognition of possible signs of abuse

The Children First guidelines require that the HSE Children and Family Services shall always be notified where a person has a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

Child protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

- (a) the safety and well-being of the child must take priority;
- (b) reports should be made without delay to the Children and Family Services of the HSE.

Dealing with disclosures from children

When information is offered in confidence, the member of staff will need tact and sensitivity in responding to the disclosure. The member of staff will need to reassure the student, and endeavour to retain his or her trust, while explaining the need for action which will necessarily involve other adults being informed.

It is important to tell the student that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/her, but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anyone else.

The following format will be taken by the staff of Coláiste Gleann Lí:

It is important to stay calm and not to show any extreme reaction to what the student is saying. Listen compassionately and take what the student is saying seriously;

It should be understood that the student has decided to tell about something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the student will not mind talking to those involved;

The student should understand that it is not possible that any information will be kept a secret;

No judgmental statement should be made about the person against whom the allegation is made;

The student should not be questioned unless the nature of what he/she is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that?”;

The student should be given some indication of what would happen next, such as informing the Designated Liaison Person, parents/carers, HSE or possibly An Garda Síochána. It should be kept in mind that the student may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage;

Record the disclosure immediately afterwards using, as far as possible, the student’s own words.

Record Keeping

When child abuse or neglect is suspected, it is essential to have a written record of all the information available. School personnel shall note carefully what they have observed and when they observed it. Signs of physical injury shall be described in detail and, if appropriate, sketched. Any comment by the student concerned, or by any other person, about how an injury occurred shall be recorded, preferably quoting words actually used, as soon as possible after the comment has been made. The record of the discussion shall be signed, dated and given to the DLP who shall retain it.

All records created shall be regarded as highly confidential and placed in a secure location by the DLP

Reporting of Concerns and Role of the Health Service Executive

Action to be taken by personnel of Coláiste Gleann Lí

If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a student may have been abused or neglected, or is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect he/she shall, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person in that school. A written record of the report shall be made and placed in a secure location by the DLP.

Where the allegation or concern relates to the DLP, the staff member shall, without delay, report the matter to the Chairperson of the Board of Management who shall assume the role normally undertaken by the DLP and shall follow the procedures outlined above.

Action to be taken by the Designated Liaison Person

In cases where there are concerns about a student, but the Designated Liaison Person is not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the DLP shall seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Services.

In consulting the HSE, the DLP shall be explicit that he/she is requesting advice and consultation and that he/she is not making a report.

If the HSE advises that a report should not be made, the DLP shall as soon as possible inform the Board of Management of this fact. In the interest of protecting the anonymity of the student, no details of the case should be disclosed to the Board of Management unless there are issues which need to be addressed directly by the Board of Management.

If the HSE advises that a report should be made, the DLP shall act on that advice. In all cases the DLP shall retain a record of the consultation with the HSE, which will note the date, the name of the HSE official and the advice given.

A report shall be made to the HSE either in person, by phone or in writing. In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of HSE staff, the report shall be made to An Garda Síochána. This may be done at any Garda Station.

All reports will include as much as possible of the information sought in the Standard Reporting Form (see Appendix.) and forwarded to the HSE as soon as possible thereafter.

When such a report is being made to the HSE, the Board of Management shall be informed. Any DLP who is submitting a report to the HSE or An Garda Síochána should inform a parent/carer unless doing so is likely to endanger the student or place the student at further risk. A record shall be made of the information communicated to the parent/carer. A decision not to inform a parent/carer shall be briefly recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.

If the DLP decides that the concerns of the member of staff should not be reported to the HSE, the member of staff shall be given a clear statement, in writing, as to the reasons why action is not being taken.

Where a student transfers from or leaves a school (including transfers from primary to post-primary) and where the DLP is aware that a child protection report relating to that student has been made to the HSE in the past, the DLP should inform the HSE of the child's transfer/move.

Role of the Health Service Executive

Arising from the Child Care Act, 1991, the HSE has certain statutory obligations for the protection and welfare of children:

The HSE must be open to receiving information from any source about a student who may not be receiving adequate care and protection;

- (a) receiving all notifications of child abuse;
- (b) taking decisions relating to the holding of child protection conferences;
- (c) ensuring interagency co-operation on child welfare and protection;
- (d) ensuring interprofessional and interprogramme co-operation on child protection and welfare;
- (e) overseeing staff training programmes;
- (f) negotiating service agreements with voluntary service providers.

Once a report of suspected child abuse or neglect has been made to the HSE, it is then a matter for the HSE to decide upon the action, if any, which is necessitated by that report. The social worker handling the case may need to seek further clarification from the person who first raised the concerns. In some cases, the response of the HSE will be to call a child protection conference.

Child Protection Conferences

It is a forum for the co-ordination of information from all relevant sources, including where necessary, school personnel. The child protection conference plays a pivotal role in making recommendations and planning for the welfare and protection of children who may be at serious risk.

The main tasks of a child protection conference are:

- (a) to facilitate the sharing and evaluation of information between professionals and parents/carers;
- (b) to formulate a child protection plan;
- (c) to identify tasks to be carried out as part of, or pending, a child protection;
- (d) to specify the appropriate service to carry out the tasks;
- (e) to appoint a key worker for the purpose of coordinating the child protection plan.

A request from the HSE for a school staff member to attend a child protection conference should be made to the DLP who should consult with the school authority. The school authority may, through the DLP, request the appropriate authorities to clarify why the attendance of the school staff member at the child protection conference is considered necessary and who else is going to be present.

It would be normal for a person attending a child protection conference to provide a report to the conference.

In line with the principle of parental involvement, which underpins Children First, a child's parents/carers would be invited to participate in a child protection conference where appropriate.

The school may be requested to monitor the child's behaviour in a manner that is consistent with the school's duty of care to all children. This may include observing the child's behaviour, peer interactions, school progress or informal conversations.

Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse regarding School Employees

It is important to note that there are two procedures to be followed:

- (a) the reporting procedure in respect of the allegation/suspicion;
- (b) the procedure for dealing with the employee.

The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for reporting the matter to the appropriate HSE area while the employer is responsible for addressing the employment issues. However, where the allegation/suspicion relates to the DLP, the employer shall assume the responsibility for seeking advice from and/or for reporting the matter to the HSE, as appropriate.

Where an allegation or suspicion of child abuse or neglect regarding a member of the Board of Management has been reported by the DLP (or employer as above) to the HSE, the Board of Management shall inform the patron that a report involving a Board member has been submitted to the HSE. It is a matter for the patron to determine if any action is necessary regarding the member's continued role on the Board.

The primary goal is to protect the children within the school. However, school employees may be subject to erroneous or malicious accusations. Any allegation of abuse or neglect shall be dealt with sensitively and support, including counselling, should be provided for staff where necessary. The Employee Assistance Service for teachers may be in a position to offer assistance to teachers. The

employee shall be treated fairly which includes the right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry.

The Board of Management of Coláiste Gleann Lí will always seek legal advice.

Protocol authorising immediate action.

Employers should have in place a written protocol for authorising immediate action when there is a requirement for a staff member to be put on administrative leave. The principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedures shall be adhered to. It is very important to note that the actions described here are intended to be precautionary and not disciplinary.

Reporting procedure

Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a school employee, the DLP shall immediately act in accordance with the procedures.

Once a disclosure is made by a child, a written record of the disclosure shall be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it. If a child wishes to make a written statement this should be allowed.

Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made by an adult, a written statement should be sought from this person. The ability of the HSE or the employer to assess suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect will depend on the amount and quality of information conveyed to them. Whether or not the matter is being reported to the HSE, the DLP shall always inform the employer of the allegation. School employees, other than the DLP, who receive allegations of abuse or neglect against another school employee, shall report the matter without delay to the DLP

Where the allegation or concern relates to the DLP, the school employee shall, without delay, report the matter to the Chairperson of the Board of Management

School employees who form suspicions regarding the conduct of another school employee shall consult with the DLP who may wish to consult with the HSE. If the DLP is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion, he/she shall report the matter to the HSE immediately. The DLP shall also report the matter to the employer.

The matter will always be treated in the strictest confidence and that the identity of the employee shall not be disclosed, other than as required under the procedures within this document, until such time as the employee has been offered the opportunity to address and/or be represented to the employer.

When an employer becomes aware of an allegation of abuse or neglect against a school employee, the employer shall arrange to privately inform the employee of the following:

- (a) the fact that an allegation has been made against him/her;
- (b) the nature of the allegation;
- (c) whether or not the matter has been reported to the HSE (either by the DLP or employer).

The employee shall be given a copy of the written record and/or allegation, and any other related documentation while ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to protect the child.

Once the matter has been reported to the HSE the employee shall be offered the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing to the Board of Management within a specified period of time.

The employee shall be told that his/her explanation to the Board would also have to be passed on to the HSE.

Where the employer is unsure as to whether the nature of the allegation warrants the absence of the employee from the school while the matter is being investigated, the Board of Management shall consult with the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána for advice as to the action that those authorities would consider necessary. Following those consultations, the Board shall have due regard to the advice offered. If, in the opinion of the Board, the nature of the allegation warrants immediate action or the ratification of action taken under the protocol referred to in the policy, the Board shall direct that the employee absent himself/herself from Coláiste Gleann Lí with immediate effect. The principles of natural justice and fair procedures shall be applied.

Where the Board of Management has directed an employee to absent himself/herself from the school, such an absence would not imply any degree of guilt on the part of the school employee. Where such an absence is directed, the Department of Education and Skills shall immediately be contacted with regard to:

- (a) formal approval for the payment of remuneration or ex-gratia payments in lieu of remuneration as appropriate, and
- (b) Departmental sanction for the employment of a substitute teacher where necessary.

The staff of Coláiste Gleann Lí are reminded of their responsibilities to maintain strict confidentiality about all matters relating to these issues. The principles of due process and natural justice shall be adhered to by the employer at all times.

Any information or details that might identify a child should not be recorded in the minutes of Board of Management meetings.

Freedom of information act 1997

Reports made to the Health Board may be subject to provisions of the Freedom of information Act 1997, which enables members of the public to obtain access to personal information relating to them which is in possession of public bodies. However the act also provides that public bodies may refuse access to information obtained by them in confidence.

Further follow-up required

The Board of Management should take care to ensure that actions taken do not undermine or frustrate any assessment/investigation being conducted by the HSE or An Garda Síochána. The Board of Management will maintain a close liaison with these authorities to achieve this.

Any further follow up action required shall accord with established disciplinary procedures and shall only be made following consultation with the HSE (and An Garda Síochána if involved).

After the consultations referred to above have taken place, and when dealing with the question of the future position of the employee, the employer shall advise the employee of the situation and shall follow the agreed procedures for the sector. The Department of Education and Skills shall be informed of the outcome.

Feedback from the Health Service Executive

The HSE Children and Family Services should provide feedback to the employer or person-in-charge on the progress of a child abuse investigation involving an employee. The HSE should seek to promptly assess complaints and to complete its assessment as quickly as possible, bearing in mind the serious implications for innocent employees. Employers or persons-in-charge should be notified of the outcome of the assessment/investigation. This will assist employers in reaching a decision about the action to be taken in the longer term concerning the employee.

Peer Abuse and Bullying

Potentially abusive behaviour between children is not ignored and, as appropriate, certain cases should be reported to the HSE.

Normal Sexual Exploration: This could consist of naive play between two children which involves the exploration of their sexuality. This type of behaviour may be prompted by exchanges between children such as: “you show me yours and I’ll show you mine”. One of the key aspects of this behaviour is its tone: there should not be any coercive or dominating aspects to this behaviour. Usually, there is no need for child protection intervention of any kind in this type of situation.

Abuse Reactive Behaviour: In this situation, one child who has been abused already acts out the same behaviour on another child. This is serious behaviour and needs to be treated as such. In addition to responding to the needs of the abused child, the needs of the child perpetrator in this situation must also be addressed.

Sexually Obsessive Behaviour: In this type of situation the children may engage in sexually compulsive behaviour. These children may not have been sexually abused but they may be extremely needy and may need very specific help in addressing these needs.

Abusive Behaviour by Adolescents and Young People: Behaviour that is abusive will have elements of domination, coercion or bribery and certainly secrecy.

Inappropriate sexualised behaviour between children, as outlined in Chapter 9 of Children First, must be taken seriously. The principal and relevant teachers concerned should arrange separate meetings with the parents/carers of all the children involved in such behaviour with a view to resolving the situation.

In cases where school personnel have concerns about a child, but the DLP is not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the DLP shall seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Services.

The Board of Management shall make appropriate arrangements to minimise the possibility of any abusive behaviour recurring within the school through the implementation of the policies outlined at the beginning of this document.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it be verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating, and occurs among children mainly in social environments such as

schools. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more persons against a victim.

In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Coláiste Gleann Lí has in place a Code of Behaviour and an Anti-Bullying Policy which includes specific methods of preventing and dealing with bullying behaviour. The policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, which were published in September 2013.

All teachers are aware of the school's anti bullying policy and its guidelines for dealing with bullying. In situations where the incident is serious and where behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive the school shall consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will be reported to the HSE Children and Family Services.

Induction of teachers and ancillary staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of this policy and the Children First Guideline (2011). They will also be vetted as part of the recruitment procedures.

Dealing with children on a one-to-one basis

If a staff member has to work/deal/communicate with students on a one to one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open. A glass partition has been fitted in the doors of all resource/special needs rooms.

Attendance

With regard to child protection we will pay particular attention to trends in non-attendance. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse. This will be aided by the DEIS Plan and the Home School Community Liaison Officer. A letter will be sent out to parents in the event that their child misses 10 days and again at the 15 day mark. A further letter will be sent to parents when the child is absent 20 days, informing them that we must inform the Educational Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency of this fact.

Vetting of Parents

A note and text will be sent out informing parents that if they wish to help out with events which would have direct involvement with students, that they must be vetted.

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

This Coláiste Gleann Lí Child Protection Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on:

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 2: Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

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. Individual Boards of Management may wish to include other items in the checklist that are of particular relevance to the school in question.

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.

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	
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 Schools'?	
Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	
Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	
Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	
Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	
Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	
Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?	
Has the Board ensured that the Department's "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools" are available to all school personnel?	
Has the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school's child protection policy to new school personnel?	
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'?	
Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made to the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP?	
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?	
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?	
Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	
Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	
Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	
