

Lumcloon National School

Lumcloon National School
Lumcloon
Cloghan
Birr
Co. Offaly
R42 Y744

Roll Number: 18777Q
Tel: 057 9345224
E-mail: school@lumcloon.net



Child Protection Policy & Risk Assessment

Under section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 The Board of Management of Lumcloon National School has a statutory obligation to ensure, as far as practicable, that children are safe from harm while they are attending the school or while participating in school activities. Lumcloon National School recognises it's duty of care to their pupils and the Board of Management will always be cognisant of the need for prudent practice from a child protection perspective.

The Board of Management (BOM) recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills, Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the BOM of Lumcloon National School has agreed the following child protection policy.

The BOM 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.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Greg Gilligan

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Niamh Keenan.

The Relevant Person is Greg Gilligan

In its policies, practices and activities, Lumcloon National School will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare. The school will recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations:

- Fully cooperate 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
- 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

Certain policies such as Lumcloon National School's Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying Policy, Attendance Policy and the Supervision of Pupils Policy will take particular account of this Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. This policy will also be considered with reference to the participation by pupils in sporting activities, other extra-curricular activities and school outings. Other practices and activities, where child protection might have particular relevance, will take due consideration of the procedures outlined within this policy. The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

Mandated Persons

The Children First Act, 2015 has placed a statutory obligation on specific people to report child protection concerns that are at or above a threshold of harm (as defined in that Act) to Tusla. Such persons are referred to as "mandated persons" under the Act. All teachers who are registered with the Teaching Council are mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015.

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In accordance with section 2 of the Children First Act, 2015 the defined threshold of “harm” in relation to a child is as follows: “harm” means, in relation to a child

- assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare
- sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise;”
- In accordance with section 2 of the Children First Act, 2015 please note the following:
- “ill-treatment” means, in relation to a child, to abandon or cruelly treat the child, or to cause or procure or allow the child to be abandoned or cruelly treated
- “neglect” means, in relation to a child, to deprive the child of adequate food, warmth, clothing, hygiene, supervision, safety or medical care;
- “welfare” includes, in relation to a child, the moral, intellectual, physical, emotional and social welfare of the child.”

Criteria for Mandated Reporting: Threshold of Harm

Under the Children First Act, 2015 registered teachers as mandated persons are required to report to Tusla any knowledge, belief or reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed. The Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse, and covers single and multiple instances.

Neglect

Neglect is defined as “to deprive the child of adequate food, warmth, clothing, hygiene, supervision, safety or medical care”. The threshold of harm, at which a registered teacher as a mandated person has a statutory obligation to report to Tusla under the Children First Act, 2015 is reached when he or she knows, believes or has 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

Ill-treatment is defined as: “to abandon or cruelly treat the child, or to cause or procure or allow the child to be abandoned or cruelly treated”. Emotional abuse is covered in the definition of ill-treatment used in the Children First Act, 2015. The threshold of harm, at which a registered teacher as a mandated person has a statutory obligation to report to Tusla under the Children First Act, 2015 is reached when he or she knows, believes or has 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

Physical abuse is covered in the references to assault in the Children First Act, 2015. The threshold of harm, at which a registered teacher as a mandated person has a statutory obligation to report to Tusla under the Children First Act, 2015 is reached when he or she knows, believes or has 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.

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Sexual Abuse

A registered teacher as a mandated person who knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being sexually abused has a statutory obligation to report this to Tusla under the Children First Act, 2015. Sexual abuse to be reported under the Children First Act, 2015 [as amended by section 55 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017] is defined as an offence against the child, as listed in Schedule 3 of the Children First Act, 2015.

Dealing with Disclosures from Children

An abused child is likely to be under severe emotional stress. Great care shall be taken not to damage that trust.

When information is offered in confidence, the member of school personnel will need tact and sensitivity in responding to the disclosure. The member of school personnel will need to reassure the child, 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 child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him or her, but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anyone else. Allegations of abuse or neglect are dealt with in a sensitive, competent and professional way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem.

Confidentiality, Sharing of Information and the Offence of Unauthorised Disclosure

Tusla has the authority to share information concerning a child, who is the subject of a risk assessment with a mandated person who has been asked to provide assistance.

Information that Tusla shares with a registered teacher, including a DLP, where that teacher is assisting Tusla to carry out an assessment, must not be shared by the registered teacher with a third party, unless Tusla considers it appropriate and authorises in writing that the information may be shared. This is in keeping with the principles of data protection which recognise that in certain circumstances information can be shared in the interests of child protection, but that such sharing must be necessary and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Children First Act, 2015 makes it an offence for a person to disclose information to a third party which has been shared by Tusla during the course of an assessment arising from a mandated report, save in accordance with law, or unless Tusla has given that person written authorisation to do so. Failure to comply with this section of the Act is an offence liable to a fine or imprisonment for up to six months or both.

Child Protection Practices

The staff and BOM of this school have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to Child Protection. The following practices should be adopted:

Physical Contact

Physical contact between school personnel and the child should always be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult. While physical contact may be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child, the following should be factors in determining its appropriateness:

- It is acceptable to the child
- It is open and not secretive

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- The age and developmental stage of the child

Visitors/Guest Speakers

Guest speakers and visiting teachers of varying disciplines, employed by the BOM of Lumcloon National School to perform specific duties, will not be left to work with a class alone.

Intimate Care Needs

In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting/intimate care, a meeting will be convened, after admission and before the child starts school, between parents/guardians, class teacher, special needs assistant, SEN Coordinator and/or Principal/Deputy Principal and if appropriate the pupil. The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain the specific needs of the child and to determine how the school can best meet those needs. The staff to be involved in this care will be identified and provision will be made for occasions when the particular staff involved are absent.

Toileting Accidents

Clean underwear and suitable clothing will be kept in the school so that if a pupil has an 'accident' of this nature, they will in the first instance be offered fresh clothing into which they can change.

If the pupil for whatever reason cannot clean or change themselves and the parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the child will be assisted by members of staff familiar to the child. In such situations, two members of staff should, when possible, be present. A record of all such incidents will be kept and parents will be notified.

Use of School Toilets

The school toilet facilities are not open to the public. Children's toilets are for the sole use of the students of Lumcloon National School and are not suitable for parents, visitors or children not attending this school. Our students may use the toilets within the school opening hours. Staff toilets are for staff use only, this includes visitors/guest speakers/guest teachers. Staff toilets are not open to the public.

Accidents

While every precaution will be taken to ensure the safety of children, we realise that accidents will happen. Accidents will be noted in our Incident Log Book and will be addressed under our First Aid & Accident Procedures.

One-to-one Teaching

It is the policy in this school that one-to-one teaching is often in the best interest of the child. Every effort will be made to ensure that this teaching takes place in an open environment.

Changing for games/ PE / Swimming

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for Games/ PE/ Swimming. Where assistance is needed this will be done in the communal area and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/ volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required, the parents/guardians of the child will be asked to assist the child. While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable, a full record of the incident should be made and reported to the Principal and parents.

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Attendance

Our school attendance will be monitored as per our Attendance Policy. With regards 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. All parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). The school's Attendance Policy outlines the procedures parents and children should use when contacting the school if there are absences or concerns of an educational/personal/family matter.

Behaviour

Children are encouraged at all times to play cooperatively; inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

Bullying

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying Policy. If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive, then the matter will be referred to the DLP.

Communication

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral Language/RSE programmes allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which is hoped will aid the pupil-teacher relationship. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress.

Internet Safety

It is the intention of the Principal and Staff at Lumcloon National School to ensure that child protection concerns will be addressed in the school's Mobile Phone Use and Social Media Use Policy. Children will be made aware of Internet Safety through class lessons and guest speakers and the school's ICT Policy and Internet Acceptable Use Programmes.

Record Keeping

Every school keeps records covering a number of matters about students who have been admitted to the school. Lumcloon National School make every effort to adhere to the following principles:

- Information is processed lawfully, fairly, and in a transparent manner
- Information is collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes
- Information collected is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purpose it is processed
- Information is kept accurate and inaccurate data is rectified without delay;
- Information is kept secure

Supervision

The school's Supervision Policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all times. A rota is displayed and shared amongst staff.

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

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In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirement of Chapter 8 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Lumcloon National School which was completed in May 2022.

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Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of Lumcloon National School

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirements of Chapter 8 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Lumcloon National School.

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 risk identified in this assessment
Training of school personnel in Child Protection matters	Low	Harm not recognised or reported promptly	Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures made available to all staff DLP & DDLP to attend training as appropriate All staff to view Túsla training module & any other online training offered Garda Vetting of all personnel
One to one teaching	Low	Harm by school personnel	Glass in window Door remains unlocked - any staff member can enter room at any time Garda Vetting of all personnel
Use of Sensory Room	Med	Harm by school personnel	Door remains unlocked - any staff member can enter room at any time Sign-in sheet outside Sensory Room Garda Vetting of all personnel
Care of Children with special needs, including intimate care needs	Med	Harm by school personnel	Policy on Intimate Care Stay Safe programme implemented Garda Vetting of all personnel
Curricular Provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay safe.	Low	Non-teaching of same	School implements SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe in full
Managing of challenging behaviour amongst pupils	Med	Harm to pupils	Health & Safety Policy

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			Code of Behaviour
Use of external personnel to supplement curriculum including: Sports coaches External Tutors Guest Speakers Volunteers/Parents in school activities Visitors/contractors present in school during school hours Visitors/contractors present during after school activities	Med	Harm to pupils	Supervision procedures in place Garda Vetting procedures complied with Child Safeguarding Statement provided
All those undertaking training placements in school	Low	Harm to pupils	Policy and procedures in place regarding work experience Garda Vetting Child Safeguarding Statement provided
Recreation breaks for pupils	Low	Harm to pupils	Supervision Policy
Classroom teaching	Low	Harm to pupils	Garda Vetting Child Safeguarding Statement
School outings	High	Harm to pupils	Supervision Policy Stay Safe Code of Behaviour
School transport arrangements which involve bus escorts	Med	Harm to pupils	Garda Vetting Child Safeguarding Statement
Administration of Medicine	Low	Harm to pupils	Policy on Administration of Medicine
Administration of First Aid	Med	Harm to pupils	Accident Policy Procedures in place regarding First Aid
Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils	Low	Harm to pupils	Anti-bullying policy RSE/Stay Safe

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			Code of Behaviour
Equal treatment of all pupils including ASD pupils Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants Members of the Traveller community Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children Pupils perceived to be LGBT Pupils of minority religious faiths Children in care Children on the Child Protection Notification System (CPNS)	Low	Harm to pupils	Anti-bullying policy SPHE/RSE/Stay Safe Code of Behaviour School Ethos
Recruitment of school personnel including - Teachers SNAs Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners	Low	Harm to pupils	Garda Vetting Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures made available to all staff Staff to view Tusla training module & any other online training offered by PDST
Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school	Med	Bullying Accessing inappropriate content/persons	ICT Policy Anti-Bullying Policy Code of Behaviour Acceptable Usage Policy
Student teachers/SNAs undertaking training placement in school	Low	Harm to pupils	Policy on Acceptance of Persons for Work Experience Garda Vetting Child Safeguarding Statement Teacher supervision
Use of video/photography/other media to record school events	Low	Harm to pupils	ICT policy Anti-Bullying Policy Parental Consent

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			Acceptable Usage Policy
After school use of school premises by other organisations for pupil events	Low	Harm to pupils	Policy on use of school premises

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 risk assessment has been completed by the Board of Management on November 5th, 2024. It will be reviewed as part of the school’s annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed  Date 25/11/2024
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed  Date 25/11/2024
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management