



Primary Circular 0061/2006

## Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Primary Schools

Dear Chairperson/ Principal

The recent Report of the Ferns Inquiry reveals both the hurt and damage that child sexual abuse inflicts on victims and their families and the absence of prompt and supportive action to protect vulnerable young people over a period of many years. In addition to increasing public awareness and understanding of the horror of child sexual abuse, the Ferns Report highlights the need for all organisations working with children to have clearly defined and effective child protection measures in place.

Schools have a particularly important role in providing their pupils with high standards of care in order to promote their well-being and protect them from harm. **School personnel are especially well placed to observe changes in behaviour or outward signs of difficulties which could cause concern in relation to child protection.**

In 2001, the Department issued Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures to all primary schools. The Department Guidelines and Procedures were based on the *Children First* national guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Children and were specifically adapted to cater for a primary school setting.

The main aim of the Department Guidelines and Procedures is to give direction and guidance to school management and staff in dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse, with the protection and well-being of the child being the most important consideration. The Guidelines and Procedures set out the steps to be taken by school management and staff in dealing with suspicions or allegations of child abuse. Once there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation, the matter should be reported without delay to the health authorities. Whilst the Ferns Report deals in the main with child abuse of a sexual nature, schools must be equally alert to signs of physical and emotional abuse or neglect and monitor the progress of children considered to be at risk.

Each board of management is required to designate a senior member of staff, normally the Principal, as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the school. The DLP acts as a liaison person with the health authorities and other agencies (e.g. the Gardai) and as a resource person to any staff member who has child protection concerns.

The Guidelines and Procedures also set out the steps to be taken by the school in dealing with allegations of child abuse against a school employee. In such cases the DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to the health authorities and/or Gardai, while the chairperson of the board of management, acting in consultation with the board, is responsible for addressing employment issues. If the nature of the allegation warrants immediate action, the chairperson should direct the employee to absent himself/herself from the school with immediate effect. In cases of uncertainty or doubt, the chairperson should consult with and follow the advice provided by the relevant child care manager in the Health Services Executive, as well as take whatever other steps are considered appropriate to remove any risk to the pupils in the school.

**In order to assist the Department in assessing the position in schools in relation to the adoption and implementation of the Guidelines please complete and return the attached short questionnaire.**

Since the Guidelines and Procedures were circulated to schools, there have been organisational changes in the health services and enclosed for reference is an updated contact list of relevant persons in the Health Services Executive with responsibility for child protection.

**It is vitally important that each school has clear and effective child protection procedures in place which are in accordance with the Department Guidelines and Procedures and that these procedures are brought to the attention of management, staff and parents in the school. School management should provide all new staff, whether teaching or otherwise, with a copy of the school's child protection guidelines and ensure that they are familiar with the procedures to be followed. The school should have nominated a senior staff member, normally the Principal, as Designated Liaison Person for the school and, where possible, the school should also have nominated a deputy DLP. The DLP is responsible for ensuring that the standard reporting procedure is followed so that suspected cases of child abuse are referred promptly to the Health Service Executive or An Garda Síochána.**

The Department has provided an in-service training programme for Principals to assist them in dealing with child protection issues and in implementing the Guidelines and Procedures. Arrangements will be made as required for the provision of additional training for principals and teachers in schools which have not yet availed of the programme or where, due to personnel changes, additional staff require training. Details of these arrangements will be provided in the near future. School management have a responsibility to promote in-service training for teachers to ensure that they have a good working knowledge of child protection issues and procedures.

The Ferns Report also highlights the importance of raising awareness of child protection issues and of providing confidence, particularly to victims, in the reporting and investigative procedures. The Stay Safe programme for primary schools plays a valuable role in this regard by seeking to give children the necessary skills to enable them to recognise and resist abuse and potentially abusive situations. The programme teaches children that they should always tell an adult that can help of any situation which they find unsafe, upsetting, threatening or abusive.

**Children are entitled to expect and receive every possible support and protection in school and all primary schools should implement the Stay Safe programme or have a similar child abuse prevention programme in place for their pupils.** In-service training for Stay Safe has been provided for most schools and further advice and support will be provided where appropriate to assist schools in implementing the programme. In this regard, a questionnaire on the implementation of the 'Stay Safe' programme will issue shortly to all primary schools and your assistance in completing this short questionnaire would be greatly appreciated. When the responses from the questionnaires are analysed, the position in regard to the implementation of the programme will be clearer.

A national review of compliance with the Children First guidelines is being undertaken by the Office of the Minister for Children (OMC) and submissions are currently being invited. Full details are available on the OMC website at [www.omc.gov.ie](http://www.omc.gov.ie)

Should you have any queries in relation to this circular, please contact:

Maura Donoghue or Eilish Dignam, Primary Administration Section, Department of Education & Science, Athlone, Co. Westmeath – Phone 090 6483733 or Phone 090 6483732.

The Department's Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures may be downloaded from the following link:

- [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/padmin\\_child\\_protection.pdf](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/padmin_child_protection.pdf)

The Department of Health and Children's national guidelines on child protection - *Children First* – can be found on the internet at:

- [http://www.dohc.ie/publications/children\\_first.html](http://www.dohc.ie/publications/children_first.html)

Johnny Bracken  
Principal Officer.  
Primary Administration

May 2006

## CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In 2001 the Department issued Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures to all primary schools.

The Guidelines directed that each primary school Board of Management must designate a senior member of staff to have specific responsibility for child protection. This person would be the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the school in all dealings with the Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochána and other parties, in connection with allegations of abuse.

The Guidelines further stipulated that where the DLP is unavailable for whatever reason, arrangements should be put in place for another nominated member of staff to assume his/her responsibilities.

It is of vital importance that the DLP and their nominated replacement are knowledgeable about child protection.

In order to establish the level of compliance with the Child Protection Guidelines in primary schools you are requested to complete the following short questionnaire and return it as soon as possible to:-

**Maura Donoghue**  
**Primary Administration Section**  
**Dept. of Education and Science**  
**Cornamaddy**  
**Athlone**  
**Co. Westmeath**

<b><u>School Name and Address:</u></b>		<b>School Roll No.</b>	
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Has your board of management formally adopted the Child Protection Guidelines?</b>		
<b>2.</b>	<b>Has your Board of Management appointed a DLP?</b>		
<b>3.</b>	<b>Has your Board of Management appointed a nominated replacement?</b>		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Has the DLP and their nominated replacement received training?</b>		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Have all school staff been briefed on the Guidelines?</b>		

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

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

**Chairperson Board of Management**

**Liosta Náisiúnta na mBainisteoirí Chúram Leanáí 2005  
National Child Care Managers Listing 2005**

<b>Ainm Name</b>	<b>Seoladh Address</b>	<b>Teil. &amp; Faics Tel. &amp; Fax</b>	<b>Seoladh Ríomhphost E-mail Address</b>
Ms Colette McAndrew	Child Care Manager Area 1 HSE East Coast Area Tivoli Road Dun Laoghaire Co. Dublin.	T: 01 2365208 F: 01 2808785 M: 087 2906293	<a href="mailto:colette.mcandrew@maild.hse.ie">colette.mcandrew@maild.hse.ie</a>
Ms Diane McHugh	Child Care Manager Area 2 HSE South Western Area Vergemont Hall Ranelagh Dublin 6.	T: 01 2680300 T: 01 2680336 F: 01 2830002	<a href="mailto:diane.mchugh@maild.hse.ie">diane.mchugh@maild.hse.ie</a> <a href="mailto:maeve.crowley@maild.hse.ie">maeve.crowley@maild.hse.ie</a>
Ms Rachel Devlin	Child Care Manager Area 3 HSE South Western Area Unit 43 Maltings Business Park 54/55/ Marrowbone Lane Dublin 8	T: 01 4544733 T: 01 4544826 F: 01 4544827 M: 086 8289025	<a href="mailto:rachel.devlin@mailm.hse.ie">rachel.devlin@mailm.hse.ie</a>
Ms.Olga Garland	Child Care Manager Area 4 HSE South Western Area Old County Road Crumlin Dublin 12	T: 01 4154756 F: 01 4154896 M: 087 2054148	<a href="mailto:olga.garland@mailm.hse.ie">olga.garland@mailm.hse.ie</a>
Doreen McGowan	Child Care Manager Area 5 HSE South Western Area The Lodge Cherry Orchard Ballyfermot Dublin 10	T: 01 6206074 F: 01 6206265 M: 087 2249830	<a href="mailto:doreen.mcgowan@mailm.hse.ie">doreen.mcgowan@mailm.hse.ie</a> <a href="mailto:tanya.mccann@mailm.hse.ie">tanya.mccann@mailm.hse.ie</a>
Ms. Mary Hargaden	Child Care Manager Area 6 HSE Northern Area Rathdown Road Dublin 7	T: 01 8825117 F: 01 8680934	<a href="mailto:mary.hargaden@mailc.hse.ie">mary.hargaden@mailc.hse.ie</a> <a href="mailto:marie.Kearney@mailc.hse.ie">marie.Kearney@mailc.hse.ie</a>
Mr.Colman Duggan	Child Care Manager Area 7 HSE Northern Area Rose Cottage Convent Avenue off Richmond Road Dublin 3	T: 01 8014630 F: 01 8014602 M: 087 2054159	<a href="mailto:colman.duggan@mailc.hse.ie">colman.duggan@mailc.hse.ie</a>

Ms Suzanne Phelan	Child Care Manager Area 8 HSE Northern Area Cromcastle Road Coolock Dublin 5	T: 01 8164279 F: 01 8479944 M: 086 6042007	<a href="mailto:suzanne.phelan@mailc.hse.ie">suzanne.phelan@mailc.hse.ie</a> <a href="mailto:gina.mcdonald@mailc.hse.ie">gina.mcdonald@mailc.hse.ie</a>
Ms Mary Kearney (on career break – not replaced yet)	Child Care Manager Area 9 HSE South Western Area Popular House Popular Square Naas Co. Kildare	T: 045 873241 F: 045 279225	Secretary: <a href="mailto:cheryl.kavanagh@mailm.hse.ie">cheryl.kavanagh@mailm.hse.ie</a>
Mr. John Quin	Child Care Manager Area 10 HSE East Coast Area Glenside Road Wicklow	T: 0404 60674 F: 0404 69044	<a href="mailto:maurag.canavan@maild.hse.ie">maurag.canavan@maild.hse.ie</a>
Marie Faughey	Child Care Manager Community Services HSE Kildare/West Wicklow Poplar House Popular Square Naas Co. Kildare	045-873291(sec) 087-9790135 045-879225	
Ms Maria Larkin	Child Care Manager Westmeath HSE Midland Area Health Centre Longford Road Mullingar Co. Westmeath	T: 044 39491 F: 044 31472	<a href="mailto:maria.larkin@mailq.hse.ie">maria.larkin@mailq.hse.ie</a>
Mr.Pat Osborne	Child Care Manager Laois/Offaly HSE Midland Area Health Centre Tullamore Co. Offaly	T: 0506 46254 F: 0506 46117	<a href="mailto:pat.osborne@mailq.hse.ie">pat.osborne@mailq.hse.ie</a>
Mr. Kevin O'Farrell	Child Care Manager Limerick HSE Mid-Western Area Vocational Training Services Dooradoyle Limerick	T: 061 482792 F: 061 482759	<a href="mailto:kevin.ofarrell@mailh.hse.ie">kevin.ofarrell@mailh.hse.ie</a>
Ms Jacqui Deevy	Child Care Manager Clare HSE Mid-Western Area Tobartaoiscaín Clonroadmore Ennis Co. Clare	T: 065 6863632 F: 065 6863636 M: 086 8184578	<a href="mailto:jackie.deevy@mailh.hse.ie">jackie.deevy@mailh.hse.ie</a>
Mr. Bill Meagher	Child Care Manager North Tipperary HSE Mid-Western Area Annbrook Limerick Road	T: 067 38300 F: 067 38301	<a href="mailto:bill.meagher@mailh.hse.ie">bill.meagher@mailh.hse.ie</a>

	Nenagh Co. Tipperary		
Mr. Gerry Lowry	Child Care Manager Cavan/Monaghan HSE North Eastern Area Health Care Unit Monaghan	T: 047 30475 F: 047 30796	<a href="mailto:gerry.lowry@maile.hse.ie">gerry.lowry@maile.hse.ie</a>
Mr. Jim McGuigan	Child Care Manager Louth HSE North Eastern Area Community Care Office Dublin Road Dundalk Co. Louth	T: 042 9385457 F: 042 9333814	<a href="mailto:jim.mcguigan@maile.hse.ie">jim.mcguigan@maile.hse.ie</a>
Mr. Boyd Dodds	Child Care Manager Meath HSE North Eastern Area Family Resource Centre Commons Road Navan Co. Meath	T: 046 9078748 F: 046 9022761	<a href="mailto:boyd.dodds@maile.hse.ie">boyd.dodds@maile.hse.ie</a>
Mr. Colin Harrison	Child Care Manager HSE North Western Area Sheil House College Street Ballyshannon Co. Donegal	T: 071 9822776 F: 071 9822779 M: 087 2461060	<a href="mailto:colin.harrison@mailb.hse.ie">colin.harrison@mailb.hse.ie</a> Send to Aisling Gillen ref letter 29/08/05
Mr. Bernard Morrin	Child Care Manager HSE North Western Area Sheil House College Street Ballyshannon Co. Donegal	T: 071 9822776 F: 071 9822779	<a href="mailto:bernard.morrin@mailb.hse.ie">bernard.morrin@mailb.hse.ie</a>  Send to Aisling Gillen only 29/08/05
Dr. Aisling Gillen	Regional Director Child Care & Family Support Services Sheil House College Street Ballyshannon	T: 071 9822776 F: 071 9822779	<a href="mailto:aisling.gillen@mailb.hse.ie">aisling.gillen@mailb.hse.ie</a>
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Mr. Barry Murray	Child Care Manager North Lee HSE Southern Area Abbeycourt House Georges Quay Cork	T: 021 4923965 F: 021 4923953 M: 087 7755851	<a href="mailto:barry.murray@mailp.hse.ie">barry.murray@mailp.hse.ie</a>
Mr. Mike Van Aswegen	Child Care Manager North Cork HSE Southern Area Gouldshill House Mallow, Co. Cork	T: 022 30264 / 30200 F: 022 32011 M: 087 9270464	<a href="mailto:Mike.Vanaswegen@mailp.hse.ie">Mike.Vanaswegen@mailp.hse.ie</a> <a href="mailto:jo.murphy@mailp.hse.ie">jo.murphy@mailp.hse.ie</a>
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Mr. Oliver Mawe	Child Care Manager Kerry HSE Southern Area 5 Denny street Tralee Co. Kerry	T: 066 7124811 F: 066 7181480	<a href="mailto:oliver.mawe@mailp.hse.ie">oliver.mawe@mailp.hse.ie</a>
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