

Child
Protection





Glossary of Terms

Age of Consent	17 years
Ancillary Staff	BoM Employees other than Teachers or SNAs e.g. Secretary, Caretaker, Cleaner etc.
BoM	Board of Management
Child	A person under the age of 18 who is not or has not been married
Child Abuse	as defined in Chapter 2 of <i>“Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017”</i>
Children First	<i>“Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (DCYA)”</i>
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DLP	Designated Liaison Person – normally the Principal
DDL P	Deputy Designated Liaison Person – usually the Deputy Principal
Harm	as defined in Section 2 of Children First Act 2015
HSE	Health Service Executive
Mandated and Non-Mandated Persons	In a school context, all Registered Teachers are Mandated Persons. All other members of the School Staff are Non-Mandated Persons
PAM	Principal Adie Memoires are one or two page briefings on Child Protection topics. They are stored on the IPPN website and may be downloaded and printed by IPPN Members. To download a PAM, simply click on the PAM icon beside the topic, download it and then insert your own school’s name and logo in the Header. They might be used as handouts for Staff or laminated and kept ready for quick and easy reference when needed
DES Procedures	<i>“Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017”</i>
Risk	any potential for harm to a child availing of a service
School Staff	The term School Staff refers to all Staff employed by the BoM in a school. This includes Teachers, SNAs and Ancillary Staff
TUSLA	Child & Family Agency (who have statutory responsibility for Child Protection)
The Act	Children First 2015



Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	SECTION 1 – COMMENCEMENT OF CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2017 - MANDATORY RESPONSIBILITIES PLACED ON SCHOOLS	2
2.1	WHAT ARE THE KEY CHANGES?	2
2.2	WHAT IS THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING CHILD PROTECTION WHICH SCHOOLS SHOULD BE COGNISANT OF?.....	2
2.3	WHAT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST SCHOOLS IN COMPLYING WITH AND DISCHARGING THEIR STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES?.....	3
3	SECTION 2 - CHILD ABUSE: TYPES, HARM, REASONABLE CONCERN THRESHOLDS, SYMPTOMS AND CONTRIBUTING CIRCUMSTANCES	4
3.1	HARM (SEE CHILDREN FIRST ACT SECTION 2)	4
3.2	REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN/THRESHOLDS FOR HARM	5
3.3	CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH GIVE RISE TO CONCERN	6
4	SECTION 3 – STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS OF THE MANDATED PERSON	7
4.1	TEACHERS AS MANDATED PERSONS.....	7
4.2	CONFIDENTIALITY	8
4.3	BEING ALERT FOR CHILD ABUSE.....	8
4.4	BULLYING	9
4.5	CREATING THE ATMOSPHERE WHERE CHILDREN FEEL COMFORTABLE MAKING A DISCLOSURE OF HARM.....	9
4.6	WHEN A CHILD MAKES A DISCLOSURE <i>PAM</i>	10
4.7	DLP / DDLP	10
4.8	RECORD KEEPING	11
5	SECTION 4 – DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE DISCLOSURES IN SCHOOL – PROCEDURES	12
5.1	PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS.....	12
5.2	REPORTING TO THE BoM	13
5.3	PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN WITH CHILD PROTECTION REPORT WHO TRANSFER SCHOOLS.....	13
5.4	PROCEDURE FOR INFORMING PARENTS.....	14
5.5	ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE REGARDING A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL STAFF.....	14
5.6	ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE REGARDING A MEMBER OF THE BoM	15
5.7	OVERSIGHT BY PATRON	15
6	SECTION 5 - RISK ASSESSMENT AND CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT	16
6.1	RISK ASSESSMENT	16
6.2	CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT.....	16
7	SECTION 6 – FURTHER CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES REQUIRED UNDER THE CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015 ...	17
7.1	PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF	17
7.2	PROCEDURES FOR INFORMING AND TRAINING SCHOOL STAFF ON CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING ISSUES	17
7.3	PROCEDURES FOR MAINTAINING A LIST OF MANDATED PERSONS UNDER THE ACT	18
7.4	PROCEDURES FOR APPOINTING A RELEVANT PERSON FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE ACT	18



1 INTRODUCTION

"It is everyone's responsibility to protect children and young people and to do our best to keep them safe" (Dr Katherine Zaponne T.D. Minister for Children and Youth Affairs)

The purpose of this Resource Bundle is to clearly outline the statutory requirements for schools in relation to Child Protection in light of the full commencement of the Children First Act 2015 on 17th Dec 2017



2 SECTION 1 – COMMENCEMENT OF CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2017 - MANDATORY RESPONSIBILITIES PLACED ON SCHOOLS

On December 11th 2017 all remaining provisions of the Children First Act 2015 commenced. This enactment places a statutory responsibility on schools to comply with the legislation underpinning Child Protection as set out in the Act.

Heretofore, schools have been aware of the actions and procedures required where there have been suspicions, concerns or allegations of child abuse. Schools have been supported by Children First Guidelines initially introduced in 1999, where good practice in child care and protection was defined. In 2011, the Department of Education & Skills provided guidelines for schools based on Children First which effectively implemented Children First in schools.

Now, with the provision of the Children First Act 2017, schools must make changes to existing procedures to comply with the Act therefore providing children with the best possible care to keep them safe.

2.1 What are the key changes?

1. All Registered teachers are now deemed to be Mandated Persons
2. Mandated Persons must assist Tusla (Child and Family Agency) if requested in assessing a concern arising from a mandatory report
3. All teachers are obliged to report Child Protection concerns above a 'threshold of harm'
4. Schools must conduct a risk assessment and produce a Child Safeguarding Statement on or before March 11th 2018
5. The Act abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement

2.2 What is the legal framework underpinning child protection which schools should be cognisant of?

1. Children First Act 2015
2. Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable persons) Act 2012
3. Freedom of Information Act 1997-2014
4. Criminal Justice Act 2006
5. Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
6. National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 – 2016
7. Teaching Council (Amendment) Act 2015
8. Data Protection Act 1998 – 2003



2.3 What supporting documentation is available to assist schools in complying with and discharging their statutory obligations and responsibilities?

1. [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 \(DCYA\)](#)
2. [Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 \(DES\)](#)
3. [Circular 0081/2017](#)



3 SECTION 2 - CHILD ABUSE: TYPES, HARM, REASONABLE CONCERN THRESHOLDS, SYMPTOMS AND CONTRIBUTING CIRCUMSTANCES

The four types of abuse are

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Neglect | (See DES Procedures 2.3.1) | PAM |
| 2. Emotional Abuse | (See DES Procedures 2.3.2) | PAM |
| 3. Physical Abuse | (See DES Procedures 2.3.3) | PAM |
| 4. Sexual Abuse | (See DES Procedures 2.3.4) | PAM |

The associated PAMs above are available as downloads for easy reference and for training purposes for Principals and School Staffs. These PAMs give all required details for each category of abuse.

Full details and definitions of the above categories, their associated Reasonable Concern Thresholds and Symptoms can be read in

- a. DES Child Protection Guidelines for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 – Chapter 2
- b. Children First National Guidelines 2017 – Chapter 2

3.1 Harm (See Children First Act Section 2)

A new definition of Harm has been introduced in Section 2 of the Children First Act 2015. The 'Threshold for Harm' as defined in the act will inform mandated persons as to how they might /should proceed with a Child Protection. It is important that ALL school staff become familiar with this definition. The Act defines harm as follows:

'harm means in relation to a child–

(a)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, or,

(b) sexual abuse of the child.'



3.2 Reasonable Grounds for Concern/Thresholds for Harm

[PAM](#)

The Reasonable Grounds for Concern are:

3.2.1 NEGLECT

(See DES Procedures 2.3.1)

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.

3.2.2 EMOTIONAL ABUSE/ILL-TREATMENT

(See DES Procedures 2.3.2)

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.

3.2.3 PHYSICAL ABUSE

(See DES Procedures 2.3.3)

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.

3.2.4 SEXUAL ABUSE

(See DES Procedures 2.3.4)

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 report 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.

3.3 Circumstances which give rise to concern

[PAM](#) (See *Children First Chapter 2 P.11 and DES Procedures 2.3.5*)

The following circumstances are associated with increased risk of abuse

- a. Parent / Guardian / Carer Factors
- b. Child Factors
- c. Community Factors
- d. Environmental Factors
- e. Poor Motivation or Willingness of Parents / Guardians to Engage

However, it is important to remember that the presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean that a child in those circumstances or settings is being abused.



4 SECTION 3 – STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS OF THE MANDATED PERSON

4.1 Teachers as Mandated Persons

(See Children First Act Section 14)

All teachers are designated Mandated Persons under the Children First Act 2015. Mandated persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015. These are:

1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla;
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report

While no criminal sanctions can be placed on teachers for non-reporting, it is open to TUSLA, a parent, a colleague or indeed any member of the public to take the following actions in regards to Teachers as Mandated Persons:

1. Make a complaint to Teaching Council which may have repercussions for membership of the Teaching Council
2. Make a report to National Vetting Bureau which may have repercussions in terms of any subsequent vetting application by a Teacher

Section 14(1) of the Children First Act 2015 states:

'...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 in the course of his or her employment or profession as such a mandated person, that a child–

- a. has been harmed*
- b. is being harmed*
- c. is at risk of being harmed*

he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report that knowledge, belief or suspicion, as the case may be, to the Agency.'

Section 14(2) of the Children First Act 2015 also places obligations on mandated persons to report any disclosures made by a child:

'Where a child believes that he or she–

- a. has been harmed*
- b. is being harmed*
- c. is at risk of being harmed*

and discloses this belief to a mandated person in the course of a mandated person's employment or profession as such a person, the mandated person shall, ... as soon as practicable, report that disclosure to the Agency.'



4.2 Confidentiality

(See DES Procedures 1.3.11)

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse or neglect should be shared only on a “need to know” basis in the interests of the child. The test is whether or not the person has any legitimate involvement or role in dealing with the issue. The assurance of confidentiality should not be given to a third party who imparts information. However, giving information to those who need to have that information, for the protection of a child who may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected is not a breach of confidentiality. As part of its oversight and quality assurance role in monitoring the implementation of these guidelines, inspectors of the Department may require access to individual files. A school is required to cooperate fully with the Inspectorate and provide such access.

It is not the responsibility of School Staff to assess or investigate or to make enquiries of parents/carers, and in some cases it could be counter-productive for them to do so. It is a matter for Tusla to assess and investigate suspected abuse and neglect and determine what action it shall take. In cases where members of the School Staff have a concern about a child, but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, the DLP will seek advice from Tusla. In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and it is not possible to make contact with Tusla, An Garda Síochána shall be contacted immediately. This may be done at any Garda Station.

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending Tusla intervention

4.3 Being alert for Child Abuse

(See DES Procedures 2.1)

It is the responsibility of all School Staff to be constantly vigilant for signs of Child Abuse and Suffering. All Staff should be thoroughly familiar with the definition and the signs and symptoms of the various types of abuse and of bullying. They should also be fully cognisant of the factors in a child’s life which may increase the possibility of that child being abused or suffering.

Mandated Persons should be thoroughly familiar with the reasonable thresholds for reporting the various types of abuse – they are outlined in Chapter above. All Staff should feel confident and free to discuss concerns they might have regarding abuse or suffering with the DLP or DDLP if they require assistance in deciding if the suspicion / information they have meets the required threshold



4.4 Bullying

(See *DES Procedures 2.3.5*)

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression – verbal, psychological or physical and can be conducted by an individual or group against one or more persons. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating, and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. It can often be based on perceived differences e.g. gender identity, sexual preference, race, ethnicity religion, parent's occupation etc. ICTs mean that bullying can be perpetrated through mobile phones or other personal devices using internet and social media enablers such as Facebook, Snapchat etc.

Some children are particularly vulnerable to bullying. These include

- SEN children
- LGBT children
- Children with underdeveloped social skills and social cue recognition
- Minority ethnic groups
- Minority religious faiths
- Traveller children
- Academic high achievers

The management of bullying among children in a school environment is an ongoing task and requires constant vigilance among School Staff as well as constantly revised and understood policies.

All of the above factors and bullying need to be taken into account as part of the process of being vigilant for the presence of child abuse and suffering among the children in every school.

4.5 Creating the atmosphere where children feel comfortable making a disclosure of harm

Children who are experiencing harm in one of the above categories will often make a disclosure to a person whom they trust and who they feel will believe them and help them. That person can often be a teacher in their school whom they view as being kind and on their side

It is important therefore, that all children feel able to trust their teachers and are confident that, if they tell the teacher about a situation they will be

- Listened to sympathetically
- Believed and never fobbed off
- Confident that their disclosure will be treated confidentially (in so far as it can be)
- Helped



4.6 When a child makes a disclosure [PAM](#)

(See DES Procedures 3.3.2)

When a child does disclose abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child and also to ensure that your actions do not jeopardise and legal action against the abuser.

If, as a mandated person, you receive a disclosure of harm from a child, which is above the thresholds set out above, you must consult with the DLP and make a mandated report of the concern to Tusla. **You are not required to judge the truth of the claims or the credibility of the child.** If the concern does not meet the threshold to be reported as a mandated concern you should report it to Tusla as a reasonable concern.

There are a number of basic 'rules' that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosures of abuse from a child which are outlined in the PAM. It is advisable to make them available to all Staff and to discuss them with Staff.

4.7 DLP / DDLP

(See DES Procedures 5.3)

Under the new DES Child Protection Procedures 2017, the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLp) remains the first point of contact for all allegations or suspicions of child abuse in the school. The requirements of the DLP are:-

1. To act as a resource person to any member of the School Staff who may have Child Protection concerns. While the DLP will be familiar with the area of Child Protection, s/he may consult with Tusla if unsure of whether or not to make a report on a particular concern. During this consultation, no details are given which might identify the parties involved
2. To ensure that the proper reporting procedures are followed in the school so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla
3. To record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to his or her attention, and the actions taken in relation to a concern or allegation of child abuse
4. To make a report at each BoM meeting in relation to Child Protection issues in the school. In the case where the DLP is not the Principal, the non-Principal DLP will ensure that the Principal has all the data required to make the report to the BoM. This report is referred to as the Oversight Report See [Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017](#) – Chapter 3.6

Where a DLP decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:-

1. The reasons for not reporting should be recorded
2. Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded
3. The Mandated Person or non-Mandated Person who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla
4. The Mandated Person or non-Mandated Person should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána



4.8 Record Keeping

[PAM](#) (See *DES Procedures 9.11*)

Good record keeping is an essential element of good governance and oversight. "*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*" contains a number of requirements in relation to ensuring appropriate records are created and maintained and can therefore be accessible for oversight purposes.

All records in relation to Child Protection should be

- Stored in a secure location
- Be indexed in such a manner as to allow for easy tracking and access of documents
- Have a unique code or serial number assigned to all parties (any person whose disclosure would identify a child or a person against whom an allegation has been made) mentioned in the documents



5 SECTION 4 – DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE DISCLOSURES IN SCHOOL – PROCEDURES

5.1 Procedures for Dealing with Child Protection Concerns

[PAM](#)

TUSLA Reporting Forms

- Child Protection and Welfare Report Form Click [here](#) for Form and Guidance Notes
- Retrospective Abuse Report Form Click [here](#) for Form and Guidance Notes

5.1.1 Child protection concern by a member of the School Staff

[PAM](#) (See DES Procedures 5.1.1 / 5.1.2)

Main Points to Note

1. All members of the School Staff must report to the DLP – unless the concern involves the DLP. In that case reports should be made to the Chairperson of the BoM
2. The DLP must meticulously record all details of the concerns and the Reporting Procedures, including any consultation with TUSLA or Gardaí
3. Where a Teacher brings the Concern to the DLP, the DLP and Teacher, as a Mandated Person, will work together on the Reporting Procedure

5.1.2 Child protection concern about a member of school personnel raised by a parent (Procedures 5.6)

Where a parent raises a child protection concern about a member of the school personnel, the DLP will ensure that the procedures outlined above are followed and the matter is considered and reported to Tusla.

1. Within 10 school days of the parent making the allegation (whether to the DLP, the BoM or another member of School Staff), the DLP will issue a written notification to the parent concerned which sets out;
 - a. that in accordance with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017
 - i. the matter has been reported by the DLP to Tusla or
 - ii. Tusla advice has been sought in respect of the matter by the DLP and on foot of that advice the matter was not reported to Tusla or
 - iii. the DLP determined that the matter did not constitute reasonable grounds for concern as set out under these procedures and therefore did not require reporting to Tusla and the reasons for that determination



- b. that it is open to the parent concerned to contact Tusla directly in relation to the matter, should the parent wish to do so and
 - c. that any allegation of abuse against a school employee reported to Tusla will be dealt with under the relevant procedures set out in [chapter 7 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 "Allegations of Suspicions of Child Abuse regarding School Employees"](#). As such, the matter will be dealt with under relevant employee disciplinary procedures and not under the school's parental complaints procedures
2. If the parent does not receive the above notification within the 10 days, s/he may raise the matter with the DLP. If the DLP does not respond within 5 days the parent may raise the matter in writing with the BoM, who will then direct the DLP to respond within 10 days of the BoM receiving the parent's notification

5.2 Reporting to the BoM

(See DES Procedures 5.5 and 9.5)

At each board of management meeting, the principal's report to the board shall include a Child Protection Oversight Report containing information under 4 headings as follows-

1. Allegations of abuse made against a member of the School Staff since the last BoM meeting
2. Other child protection concerns in respect of pupils in the school (i.e. concerns that do not involve any allegation of abuse against a member of the School Staff)
3. Child protection concerns arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils and
4. Summary data in respect of reporting

Main Points to Note

1. The BoM is required to examine all details in relation to any of the above headings to ascertain if the DLP made the correct decisions in relation to Child Protection
2. In order to do so the BoM will have full access to all material in the File on each case, including names of persons involved
3. The issue of Confidentiality is very important in situations where members of the BoM may be privy to details of the lives of children, families or Staff which may or may not be true

5.3 Procedures for Children with Child Protection Report who transfer schools

(See DES Procedures 5.7)

Where a child 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 child has been made to Tusla in the past, the DLP should inform Tusla of the child's transfer/move.



5.4 Procedure for Informing Parents

(See Children First Ch 3 P25)

1. A school is not required by The Children First Act 2015 to inform the family that a report under the legislation is being made to Tusla. It is good practice however to tell the family that a report is being made and the reasons for the decision
2. It is not necessary to inform the family that a report is being made if by doing so the child will be placed at further risk or where the family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment
3. You do not need to inform the family if you reasonably believe that by doing so it may place you at risk of harm from the family
4. Where the DLP has any doubt as to whether to inform a parent/carer that a report concerning his or her child is being made to Tusla, the DLP shall seek the advice of Tusla
5. The DLP will create a record of all communication with a parent when informing him/her that a report has been made to Tusla concerning his/her child. The DLP will make a record of not informing the parents and the reasons for not doing so, if parents are not informed. See [Summary of Record Keeping](#)

5.5 Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse regarding a member of the School Staff

(See DES Procedures Chapter 7)

This is the most serious form of Allegation which a BoM will have to deal with. As it may involve the suspension of a Teacher, SNA or member of the Ancillary Staff, the BoM should seek comprehensive legal advice.

Main Points to Note

1. The Principal as DLP has no role in the process once the matter has been reported to TUSLA
2. It is purely a matter for the Employer – the BoM to deal with employment issues arising from allegations of abuse made against any member of the school staff
3. The issue of Confidentiality is very important in situations where members of the BoM may be privy to details of the lives of children, families or Staff which may or may not be true



5.6 Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse regarding a member of the BoM

(See DES Procedures 9.10.4)

Where an allegation or suspicion of child abuse regarding a member of the BoM has been reported to Tusla, the BoM will inform the patron of the fact. The patron will determine if any action is necessary regarding the member's continued role on the BoM.

5.7 Oversight by Patron

(See DES Procedures 9.10)

1. The patron must be provided with a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement and the notification regarding the annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement
2. Records of the annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and its outcome shall be made available, if requested, to the patron
3. Where an allegation or suspicion of child abuse or neglect regarding a member of the BoM has been reported by the DLP (or employer) to Tusla, the BoM will inform the patron
4. The patron must also be informed where the BoM has not reported an allegation of abuse against an employee to Tusla where advised by Tusla to do so



6 SECTION 5 - RISK ASSESSMENT AND CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

6.1 Risk Assessment

[PAM](#) (See DES Procedures 8.8)

The Act requires all BoMs to carry out a Risk Assessment in preparation for the drafting of a Child Safeguarding Statement. This assessment outlines and highlights the potential for harm to children while in the school. It should be noted that risk in this context is the risk of abuse and not general health and safety risk.

The Risk Assessment is a 4 Step Process

6.1.1 Step 1 - Identify the Risk

- Think about who or what might cause harm to children in the school
- Involve all stakeholders – Teachers, SNAs, Ancillary Staff, Parents, BoM and Children. Different people will have different perceptions of what is a risk because of their engagement experiences with the school

6.1.2 Step 2 - Rank each Risk

- Consider the likelihood of the risk occurring and how serious the consequences could be
- Rank each risk in terms of low, medium and high risks

6.1.3 Step 3 – Control and Manage each Risk

- Who owns the risk? Assign risk owners
- What current controls are in place to reduce the risk?
- What future actions must be done to reduce the risk?
- What else do you need to do about the risk?

6.1.4 Step 4 - Monitor and Review

- Are the controls effective?
- Are the actions effective?

6.2 Child Safeguarding Statement

[PAM](#) (See DES Procedures 8.9)

Once the Risk Assessment has been completed, the BoM can now proceed to develop a Child Safeguarding Statement. The BoM must use the Template provided by the DES – See [Child Safeguarding Statement Template](#)

The DES has also published a checklist for reviewing the Child Safeguarding Statement annually. See [Child Safeguarding Review Checklist](#)



7 SECTION 6 – FURTHER CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES REQUIRED UNDER THE CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015

7.1 Procedures for recruitment of School Staff

(See DES Procedures 8.6)

BoMs must ensure that the proper and current Vetting Procedures are carried out when recruiting. Details of current Vetting Arrangements and Regulations for Teachers are available from the Teaching Council website at <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Vetting/>. The Patron Bodies are the authorised for administering vetting for other school employees and volunteers. The BoM must ensure that all adults and visitors to the school who have access to children are properly screened and vetted. These include:-

- Teachers
- Substitute Teachers
- Supplementary Teachers – e.g. Speech and Drama, Dancing etc.
- Coaches – recruited by the school or from a sporting organisation
- SNAs
- Ancillary Staff
- Persons on Placement as part of their training
- Persons on Work Experience
- Volunteers for during or after school activities

Proper indexed records should be kept of the vetting details of the above

7.2 Procedures for informing and training School Staff on Child Protection and Safeguarding Issues

(See DES Procedures 8.7)

The BoM must ensure, through the dissemination of information and a relentless emphasis on Child Safety training and discussion, that a culture of Child Protection exists among the School Staff and School Community. The development of such a culture is the most effective means of ensuring that all children in the school are safe from harm, Such a culture ensures that there is constant vigilance among the School Staff and Parents and that there is zero tolerance of any behaviour which would cause harm to a child.

a) Information

In relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement

- A copy will be displayed in a prominent location in the school
- It will be made available on the school website
- It will be issued to all members of the School Staff
- It will be made available to the Parents Association



In relation to Policies which relate to Child Protection

- All Policies in relation to Child Protection will be available on the school website
- All Policies in relation to Child Protection will be made available to School Staff and Parents on request

b) Training

- The BoM will ensure that all School Staff receive regular training and updating on Child Protection Matters. The BoM will avail of whatever training is available from the DES and will support the Principal in ensuring that regular training in Child Protection Matters is carried out
- The BoM will ensure, through regular training and discussion, that all members of the School Staff are aware of their roles in Child Protection and fully understand the Policies and Procedures in place in the school

7.3 Procedures for maintaining a list of mandated persons under the Act

(See DES Procedures 8.9.1)

In the case of schools, this is a list of the Teachers who work in the school. It includes all Registered Teachers whatever their current teaching role or status (Permanent, CID, Temporary, Substitute etc) in the school.

7.4 Procedures for appointing a Relevant Person for the purposes of the Act

(See DES Procedures 8.9.1)

Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 defined the Relevant Person in schools as being the DLP.