

Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, 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 Board of Management of Columba College, Killucan, Co. Westmeath has agreed the following child protection policy:

The Board of Management has adopted as policy 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. In addition the Board of Management is guided by the Department of Education and Science circular 0065/2011 and Children First "National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children". Circular 0065/2011 outlines new oversight arrangements and these are incorporated into the guidelines which follow. Copies of all relevant documents are available from the Principal or may be viewed on www.education.ie/www.dcyia.ie.

- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Ms. Bernice Martin
- The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Mr. Dermot Brady

In its policies, practices and activities, Columba College 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 co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;

- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters. The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the items/policies listed below:

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Procedures

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request.

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

Child Protection

Staff Procedures

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities.

The Board of Management has adopted as policy 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. In addition the Board of Management is guided by the Department of Education and Science circular 0065/2011 and Children First "National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children". Circular 0065/2011 outlines new oversight arrangements and these are incorporated into the guidelines which follow. Copies of all relevant documents are available from the Principal or may be viewed on www.education.ie/www.dcy.a.ie.

- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Ms. Bernice Martin
- The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Mr. Dermot Brady

Staff Procedures:

If a member of staff should receive a report of a child protection issue they should;

- Listen compassionately
- Use open, non-specific questions if what is being reported is unclear
- Make a careful record of the report, using the persons own words
- If the person reporting is an adult, invite him/her to provide a written account of the matter
- Indicate what will happen next
- Report the matter immediately to the Designated Liaison Person and in their absence the Deputy Designated Liaison Person
- Keep the matter strictly confidential

The member of staff should not;

- Question the person reporting, other than to seek clarification
- Make any judgemental statements
- Give any undertaking of secrecy
- Start to investigate

In the event that the Designated Liaison Person does not report the allegation to the Health Service Executive, the member of staff who reported the matter will be given a written statement as to why action is not being taken.

The member of staff who reports an allegation to the Designated Liaison Person may be asked to attend a Child Protection Conference. The Designated Liaison Person will consult with the Board of Management before responding to such a request.

A member of staff reporting an allegation or suspicion in good faith has the legal protection of qualified privilege at common law and is also protected under 'The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act' 1998. The Freedom of Information Acts and the Data Protection Acts will apply to records.