

Westport Scoil Cheoil

Child Protection Policy

Westport Scoil Cheoil formally adopts and implements without modification the new 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' (2011) as part of their overall child protection policy. In doing so Westport Scoil Cheoil uses the standard template child protection policy which is in Appendix 1 of the DES Child Protection Procedures; names the DLP and deputy DLP in the Westport Scoil Cheoil child protection policy; displays the name of the DLP in a prominent position near the main entrance to the venues and the child protection policy is available to all Westport Scoil Cheoil personnel via the Westport Scoil Cheoil website.

Designated Liaison Person:

Westport Scoil Cheoil has appointed course director Dr Maura Thornton as Designated Liaison Person. Kate Heneghan, deputy course director is named as the DDPL –Deputy Designated Liaison Person. The role of the DLP/ DDLP is to liaise with all relevant agencies, whether in seeking advice, reporting or in follow up consultations. If informed by a member of the school community of a concern, the DLP/ DDLP shall in the first instance seek advice by phone, from a senior child care officer/social worker/manager/designated person employed by the Health Board. At this early stage all parties including the DLP/DDLP may remain anonymous and there is no requirement on the DLP/DDLP to disclose the names of any party including the name of the school or her own name. However, the DLP/DDLP should note the name of any Health Board employee who gives advice. It is incumbent on the DLP/DDLP to follow through on all advice from the Health Board. Written records shall be kept of all phone calls and meetings.

Procedures in dealing with a disclosure/suspicion from a child/third party

- Teachers who suspect child abuse/neglect should report their concerns to the DLP/DDLP at the first instance and carefully record their observations.
- Disclosures of Child Abuse/neglect from a third party will be reported to the DLP/DDLP. If a third party starts to tell a teacher about an alleged child abuse incident the teacher will ask them to speak to the DLP/DDLP. If the person does not inform the DLP/DDLP the teacher will do so.
- Where a child discloses alleged abuse/neglect to a teacher, the person receiving that information should listen carefully and supportively. IT IS NOT THE ROLE OF THIS TEACHER OR DLP/DDLP TO INVESTIGATE AN INCIDENT / ALLEGATION / SUSPICION.

HIS/HER ROLE IS TO LISTEN AND RECORD INFORMATION. Great care must be taken not to abuse the child's trust. This should not be a formal interview.

- Listen to the child
- Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises
- Do not stop a child recalling significant events
- Do not over-react
- Confidentiality should be assured – however explain that further help may have to be sought.
- Record the discussion accurately noting:

What, where and when?

Descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries

Explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate

Sign and date the record

Retain the record securely

- Whether cases of abuse/neglect are suspected or confirmed, confidentiality will be respected. The information on individual cases will be restricted to the teacher(s) immediately involved with the child and will be on a *need to know* basis.
- The DLP/DDLP will record the incident. It is not their function to investigate the issue.
- If the suspected abuser is the DLP then the suspicion and any records will be passed on to the DDLP who will proceed as per guidelines.
- Informal contact with the designated person in the Western Health Board will be made, seeking advice as to whether a referral should be made. The DDP/DDLP will be explicit that s/he is requesting advice and not making a report. It is not necessary at this stage for the DDP/ DDLP to disclose his/her name or the name of the school.
- The advice given by the Health Board must be acted upon.
- If the advice is not to refer, the DLP/DDLP will record this advice as the reason for non-referral. These notes will be kept.
- If the advice from the Health Board is to refer the case, the DLP/DDLP will do so. However, prior to referring, the DLP/DDLP will inform the parent of her intention to refer, unless this course of action is injurious to the child.
- Following referral and the completion of the standard form, the school will have no further part to play in the investigation.
- If a case conference is required, the DLP/DDLP will be invited to attend.

All records will be held in a central, securely locked location.

Allegations against a tutor or committee member/ anyone working with WSC:

- Procedures followed are similar to those of a disclosure

- Person is made aware of the allegation against him/her
- Person will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing and at a meeting of the Board of Westport Scoil Cheoil.
- There will be a meeting of the committee of Westport Scoil Cheoil to review the allegation, giving due consideration to any advice given by Health Board and Gardaí.
- The Committee of Westport Scoil Cheoil will consider placing the person on leave, pending the outcome of investigations by the Health Board and Gardaí.

Organisational Implications and Prevention of Child Abuse

Gárda Vetting

All staff employed from by Westport Scoil Cheoil will sign a declaration that they are vetted by the Gardaí. Staff will be asked for copies of their vetting forms and these will be kept on file with all Westport Scoil Cheoil documentation with the Chairperson of the BOM

Supervision

Supervision : to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks and during all classes.

Behaviour

Children are to be encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed by the Committee of Westport Scoil Cheoil. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP/DDLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

Dealing with children on a one-to-one basis

If a teacher has to work/deal/communicate with children on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open if there is not a glass partition fitted on the door.

Toileting Accidents

Adults working with children with intimate care needs will always make sure that any physical contact is for the purpose of meeting the needs of the child. Adults will always respect the dignity of the child.

CODE OF PRACTICE for Westport Scoil Cheoil:

The following guidance includes a variety of contexts in which Westport Scoil Cheoil employees carry out their activities: The Code Of Practice is to safeguard the welfare of the

young children in our charge and to ensure that safe and sensible steps will continue to be taken to ensure the safe practice and environment for young people, tutors and volunteers alike.

Ensure that TWO Westport Scoil Cheoil Committee members arrive together to open the venue. Arrange seating appropriately for both tutor and pupil with respect to physical proximity. It is necessary for a tutor to report inappropriate behaviour to a Branch adult and to the DLP/DDLP. Tutors and parents to be made aware of event timetable. Ensure that after class all children are collected promptly after all events. Drop off and collection times should be strictly adhered to. Ensure adequate supervision of young people while they are waiting for class. A class register and incident book should be kept. (Record details of any incident occurring – date, time, place and summary of the incident pertaining to children’s welfare)

If a situation occurs where there is need to transport a child a. Ensure that two adults travel in the car when only one child is being transported. b. When transporting young persons seat them in the back seat. C. Only carry the appropriate number vis a vis seat belts.

3. Insurance: Westport Scoil Cheoil Policy provides cover for all inclusive Activities. Whilst Westport Scoil Cheoil has an Insurance Policy the following rules must be adhered to: Ensure that all pupils have been collected prior to the committee leaving the venue. Pupils must be supervised. 4. Photography: Authorisation. Parents will sign consent forms for the recording images of children/ persons at Westport Scoil Cheoil. The Committee of Westport Scoil Cheoil will review this policy at regular intervals and will provide effective management and training for all personnel. Policy amended 10 January 2015.

Definition of Child Abuse:

Child Abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

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, medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific moment. Staff must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child is being neglected.

Emotional Abuse: occurs when a child’s need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child’s behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. A child may be affected by an event in his/her life and staff must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child's emotional needs are being neglected.

Physical Abuse: is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Staff must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child may have been physically abused.

Sexual Abuse: occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Staff must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child may have been sexually abused.

Basis for Reporting to a Health Board

A health board shall always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse. With regard to emotional abuse and/or physical neglect, consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional neglect or physical neglect would constitute reasonable grounds for concern.