



Child Protection Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

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

It is important to be alert to the possibility that children with whom we are in contact may be experiencing abuse or neglect. This responsibility is particularly relevant for college staff.

For the purpose of these procedures, 'a child' means anyone who is under 18 years of age. In Ireland, the Child Care Act, 1991 defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or who has been married. For the purposes of this policy where 'child' or 'learner under 18 years' is referred to, the reference also applies to vulnerable adults. A vulnerable adult means a person aged 18 or older who, by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against 'significant harm' or 'exploitation'.

To this end, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Governors of Monaghan Institute has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. The Board of Governors 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 and Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
2. **The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Martina Rooney, Director.**
3. **The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Rynagh Williams, Deputy Director.**
4. In its policies, practices and activities, Monaghan Institute will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare: The College 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 learners who are under 18 years of age.
 - fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

Disclosures by a Learner under the age of 18 years.

5. If a learner, under the age of 18 years, makes a disclosure of abuse, to any member of staff in Monaghan Institute the information will be referred by the staff member to the DLP. The DLP in Monaghan Institute may in turn report this information to the Child and Family Agency, TUSLA and/or relevant authorities.

Retrospective Disclosures by Adults

6. From time to time adults (person over 18 years of age) may disclose abuse, which took place during their childhood. If such disclosures are made to any member of staff in Monaghan Institute, this information will be referred, by the staff member to the Designated Liaison Person. The DLP may in turn report this information to the Child and Family Agency, TUSLA and/or other relevant authorities. The learner who has made a retrospective disclosure will be given contact details of The National Counselling Service - see details below.
7. In order to safeguard the learner concerned, information exchanged during a disclosure within Monaghan Institute will be treated with confidentiality, however, assurances of absolute confidentiality cannot be given to a learner who makes a disclosure to a member of staff as this information must be passed to the DLP. Information will be shared strictly on a need to know basis. Parents of learners under 18 years will be informed by DLP if a report is being sent to CFA/Gardaí, unless doing so is likely to place a child at further risk.

It is not the responsibility of college staff to investigate the situation. The DLP may report to the CFA who investigates and decides if there is a need to refer to the Gardaí.

8. The following college policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to child protection (e.g. the Learner Code of Conduct, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Social Media Policy, Policy on Educational Tours & Field Trips, Policy on Learner Work Placements and Garda Vetting etc). 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.
9. This policy has been made available to college personnel and is readily accessible to parents/learners on request. The policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every academic year.

Retrospective Disclosure – The National Counselling Service

The HSE National Counselling Service is in place to listen to, value and understand those who have been abused in childhood. The service is a professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service and is available free of charge in all regions of the country, visit the following website for more information:

www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental_Health_Services/National_Counselling_Service)

The service can be accessed either through healthcare professionals or by way of self-referral (Freephone 1800 234117).