

Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board

Child Protection Policy for MSLETB Staff

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Definitions and Roles

Definition of 'Child'

In these guidelines "child" means a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The role of the DLP is set out in the Child Protection Procedures and is a role which is critical for the dissemination of information to all staff and also for the co-ordination of training on child protection matters in their respective school/centre/location.

Where a DLP in a school is required to make a report to the Board of Management. In centres/locations where there is no Board of Management, then a report is made to the Chief Executive or relevant Director.

Child Protection Liaison Person (CPL)

The role of the CPL is to provide support to the DLP, to provide clarity in respect of the Child Protection Procedures and to ensure appropriate legal advice is obtained. The role is not a DLP role and is purely advisory.

Introduction

Children, because of their dependency and immaturity, are vulnerable to abuse in various forms. Parents or guardians have primary responsibility for the care and protection of their children. However, MSL ETB has a responsibility to ensure the protection of children participating in any services or activities delivered by the ETB.

This policy extends to all staff. All employees must be sensitive to the vulnerability of children during the course of their duties and act in a responsible manner at all times. It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the statutory authorities and shall not be undertaken by the Designated Liaison Person(s)/Child Protection Liaison Person(s) or other employees of the ETB.

This policy has been developed in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 as published by the Department of Education (https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Child-Protection/child_protection_guidelines.pdf).

This policy is directed at all those who have contact with children in the normal course of their duties, to provide guidance on appropriate behaviour around children and what to do if physical, sexual or emotional and neglect abuse is suspected.

This Policy is not a legal interpretation of the legislation.

Child Protection Policy Statement

MSL ETB is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children in all services and activities. We undertake to provide a safe environment where the welfare of the child is paramount. To this end the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 (hereinafter Child Protection Procedures) as published by the Department of Education are adopted and extended to all areas of delivery with the ETB and to all staff irrespective of grade or role.

To adhere to the principles and guidance contained within the aforementioned Child Protection Procedures for centres and locations where there is no Board of Management structure in place, the Chief Executive of the ETB will delegate, under section 13 of the Education and Training Board Act, 2013, the role of Designated Liaison Person (DLP) to the person managing / coordinating the centre/location.

In addition, the Chief Executive shall ensure the following:

- The role of a Child Protection Liaison Person(s) will established for the organisation to support DPL's in carrying out their role. This role will be delegated to senior grades within Head Office for consistency of approach and to build advisory expertise
- Garda Vetting Procedures are in place for all relevant employees and volunteers
- Appropriate training of all employees in child protection
- The reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse is confidential

While there are mandatory reporting requirements placed on certain categories of staff, all staff have a responsibility to raise concerns with the Designated Liaison Person associated with their School/College/Centre /Location.

Procedure

The procedures to apply in all instances of suspected cases of abuse are the Child Protection Procedures as published by the Department of Education & Skills. Where a staff member has a concern of suspected abuse, they must in the first instance bring those concerns to the DPL. Once notified of concerns the DPL will follow the Child Protection Procedures, seek appropriate advice, and notify the relevant statutory authorities.