



# BRAY SCHOOL PROJECT NS



## Parent Explainer: Understanding Child Protection Procedures in Irish Schools

In Ireland, schools follow strict **Child Protection Procedures** outlined by the Department of Education and TUSLA (the child and family agency) to ensure every child's safety. Here's an overview of the key details parents and guardians should understand:

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### 1. What is child protection?

Child protection aims ensure that children are safe from harm, abuse, or neglect. This includes safeguarding their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

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### 2. Who is responsible in schools?

Each school in Ireland has a **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** and a **Deputy DLP** to handle child protection concerns. In our school:

- **Alan Bedford** is the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**.
- **Sinead Jones** is the **Deputy DLP**, acting as a backup if Alan is on leave.

Both are trained to respond to concerns about a child's safety and well-being.

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### 3. What happens if there is a concern?

If a staff member has concerns about a child's welfare, or a child makes a disclosure to a staff member, they report it to the DLP. The DLP reviews the concern with the staff member to discuss if it meets the threshold of whether to refer the matter to **Tusla**, the Child and Family Agency. Often, the DLP will call the duty social worker to get advice on the situation. If the duty social worker advises to report, the matter will be reported to Tusla. All teachers are mandated persons and if it meets the threshold, they are legally required to report, regardless of their personal thoughts. **This reporting is always done in an unbiased way, without making judgement of the situation, the likelihood of it being true or not, or any assumptions about the situation.**

In most situations, parents and guardians will be informed that the report has been made by the school. In some situations, depending on the nature of the concern and the guidance provided by Tusla, a social worker will be the person to inform the parents and guardians.



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If a report is made, Tusla will follow up with the school and the parents/ guardians. They may speak directly to the child first, or to the parents. In **most** situations Tusla processes the report in a supportive manner, and it is closed after some discussion/explanation.

In serious cases, Tusla or the Gardaí may become directly involved to ensure the child's safety.

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## 4. How are staff trained?

All school staff receive mandatory child protection training under the **Children First Act 2015**. This training ensures that teachers and staff can recognise signs of abuse or neglect and respond appropriately. The school ensures that staff are regularly updated on the latest procedures.

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## 5. What should parents/ guardians know about reporting?

Teachers are considered Mandated Persons under Irish law. This means they are **legally required/obliged** to report concerns directly to Tusla. They do not have a choice. While schools encourage parents/ guardians to discuss concerns with them, Tusla may act independently if necessary to protect a child's welfare.

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## 6. How can parents/ guardians support child protection efforts?

Parents/ guardians are encouraged to maintain open communication with their children and the school. If you notice any changes in your child's behaviour or have concerns about their well-being, discussing these with the DLP or Deputy DLP ensures the school can take appropriate action.

We are here to listen and the school will always have the child's welfare at heart when reporting or discussing any concerns.