

Errigal College

Coláiste an Earagail

Windyhall, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Principal: Charlie Cannon errigalcollege@donegaletb.ie

Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Name of Service

Errigal College is a second level vocational school operating under the aegis of Donegal ETB. The school is a recognised school as defined by the Education Act 1998. In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of Errigal College has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement. 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, procedures, practices and activities.

2. Nature of service provided

Errigal College provides a high quality inclusive co-educational service to young people from the Errigal College catchment area. Students include mainstream second level students, students assigned to our Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) departments, and, students (learners) who are enrolled in the school's Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses.

As a child-centred school Errigal College is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children under its care. The school is committed to implementing in full all relevant sections of Children First Act 2015 and to complying fully with all regulations and requirements as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills in relation to child protection and welfare.

3. Risk Assessment

Risks identified

Errigal College provides an education service to students ranging on average from 12 – 19 years enrolled in main stream programmes and for learners participating on QQI PLC courses.

In addition, the school also provides an education service to a number of students with special education needs who may be more vulnerable than their peers and who therefore carry a greater duty of care and by extension require more supports than other children might reasonably require.

4. **Risk Management**

In managing the risk associated within the school, Errigal College has in place a number of structures, systems, policies and procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of students in its care. 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, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

- Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- Comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- 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/learners 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
- Respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

Errigal College will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

1. The following procedures/measures are in place:

In relation to any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child attending the school, the school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the DES website.

A. *Staff Vetting*

All teaching staff are vetted by the Teaching Council and this is a requirement for registration and employment purposes. In addition newly appointed teaching staff are also vetted by Donegal ETB prior to appointment. Special Needs Assistants and ancillary or administrative staff are also vetted by Donegal ETB.

B. *Non-staff -*

PLC students are vetted prior to commencement of the courses in which they are enrolled.

Regular service providers such as canteen operators, bus drivers are vetted by Donegal ETB.

All volunteers, guest speakers or facilitators who will be interacting with students are vetted by Donegal ETB.

C. *Mandated Persons*

All teachers are mandated persons under the terms of the Children First Act 2015. This means that teachers are now required to report concerns disclosed to them by students or parents / guardians directly to TUSLA.

D. *Supervision & Substitution*

The school has a structured supervision and substitution scheme operated by fully trained staff who have all been vetted by Donegal ETB and / or the Teaching Council. The scheme provides supervision for all scheduled breaks while substitution arrangements are put in place as need arise.

E. *Building Layout*

Errigal College has in place a system which keeps younger and older students separate for some key times. Junior and senior students have lockers on different floors. Students with special education needs may have special lockers assigned to safeguard these children. There are also separate toileting facilities for students with disabilities and / or special education needs.

F. *Guidance Counsellor*

Errigal College has a fully trained Guidance Counsellor who links in with students on a regular basis to check on their wellbeing and to offer support for students in crisis. The Guidance Counsellor is also a member of the SST team.

G. *Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)*

Our school has a full time HSCL teacher who links in with students and parents to offer support particularly in the area of welfare. The HSCL teacher liaises with various agencies to support the most vulnerable children who may be in crisis.

H. Student Support Team (SST)

Errigal College has a Student Support Team comprising senior management, the Guidance Counsellor, Year Heads, SEN, HSCL and the Behaviour for Learning teacher. The school's NEPS officer also attends meetings on a regular basis. An extended team comprising ASD teachers and the school administrator also convenes annually to identify students at risk. The core team has a scheduled meeting each week which reviews significant welfare developments in the welfare to identified students who may be at risk. Interventions are discussed and actions implemented where appropriate.

I. Inter-agency cooperation

The school cooperates with a number of agencies to ensure that child welfare is safeguarded for all children under its care. Such co-operation includes liaising with TUSLA, NEPS, CAMHS, Springboard, HSE, An Garda Síochana, Foróige, Donegal Youth Services etc.

J. Staff Supports

- Staff are encouraged and facilitated in attending appropriate CPD to support them in their role safeguarding the welfare of all children under their care.
- Staff Handbook - Staff are provided with a handbook each year in which clear information and advice is given in relation to child protection and welfare. Advice on identifying students at risk and what to do if a child makes a disclosure is included in the handbook. An outline of appropriate procedures to follow as well as information about the relevant person to whom concerns should be brought.
- Induction of new staff - All new staff are inducted in the school providing them with the staff handbook and an overview of child protection procedures. Additionally, the school is part of Droichead, the national induction programme for new teachers.

K. Membership of SCP

Errigal College is part of the Errigal/Mulroy and Educate Together School Completion Programme, a collaborative partnership of local

schools which seeks to support students at risk of early leaving. All interventions in the SCP seek to protect children and improve their welfare.

In addition to the measures outlined above separate extra measures are put in place to support the most vulnerable students and manage any risk in respect of their welfare.

- The school has two ASD classrooms to support students with autism. The rooms are fully staffed with teachers and SNAs on hand throughout the day to support students who are vulnerable. This core staff work very closely with the students to ensure they are fully protected while in the school.
- Specialised programmes are run for students with additional and / or special education needs. These programmes are delivered by staff who are trained in the delivery of special education supports.
- Students with assessed special education needs have access to SNA support to ensure their care needs and welfare is safeguarded.
- Special arrangements are put in place at social times to support students with complex special education needs. A separate room is available for vulnerable students which is always supervised.
- Separate changing facilities are used for students with complex learning needs in order to safeguard their dignity.

5. Policies and Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following policies and procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Child Protection Policy
- Student Support Team Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy
- Volunteering & Work Placement Policy
- Data protection Policy
- Code of Practice for dealing with complaints made by parents / guardians or students over the age of 18.
- Teaching Council Complaints procedure for registered teachers
- Donegal ETB Recruitment Policy

- Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools
- DES Circular Letter 65/2011 - Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post-primary schools
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to TUSLA
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person

All procedures listed are available upon request.

6. **Designated Liaison Person(s)**

While all teaching staff in the school are mandated persons as defined and described in the legislation the school also has in place a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and a Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLp).

- The Designated Liaison Person is **Mr Charlie Cannon, Principal**
- The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is **Mr Ciaran Rodgers, Deputy Principal**

7. **Implementation**

Errigal College recognises that implementation is an ongoing process. Our school is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on March 9th 2019 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:

Date _____

Chairperson (Board of Management)

Signed:

Date _____

Principal

For queries please contact the principal (relevant person as defined in the Children First Act 2015).

Board of Management Meeting

March 9th 2018

Agenda

- 1 Child Safeguarding Statement
- 2 Circular Letter 03/2018

Circular 03/2018

Re: Circular letter 3/18 Section 4

I refer to Circular Letter 03/18 relating to Leadership and Management in Post-Primary Schools. I advise that Donegal ETB has been informed at the ETB meeting of Monday 5th March 2018 that I am initiating a review process in each of our 15 schools in relation to the identification of leadership and management needs and priorities in each school. Please advise your Board of Management of the initiation of the process. The required consultation process between the Principal, Deputy Principal and the teaching staff should be completed in a 6 to 8 week period.

I am aware that an information session on the circular and the process has been arranged by Martin Gormley, Director of Schools with the Human Resources Department for school Principals on Friday 9th March 2018.

I am therefore delegating to you as Principal the authority to commence the review according to the method specified in the circular and to keep your Board of Management informed of the initiation and the review.

Yours sincerely

Ms Anne McHugh

Chief Executive, Donegal ETB