

# Sonas

**Special Junior Primary School**  
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Roll No. 201620

## Sonas Child Protection Policy

### Introduction

The staff, parents and management of **Sonas Special Junior Primary School** have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines.

This policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the following areas:-

- a) Prevention – curriculum provision
- b) Procedures – procedures for dealing with concerns / disclosures
- c) Practice – best practice in child protection.

An individual copy of this policy document and the appended section from the Department of Education and Science Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures will be made available to all staff.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with ‘Children First: national guidance for the protection and welfare of children’ (2011) and the DES ‘Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures’.

### Aims

This policy aims to:

- Create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment in which the welfare of the child is paramount.
- Provide a personal skills education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in the school.
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community.
- Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children and staff.
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of and familiar with the ‘Children First: national guidance for the protection and welfare of children’ (2011) and the DES guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and / or disclosures of child abuse.
- Provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all staff.

## **Prevention**

Sonas provides an education for children aged 3-6 years with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The triad of Autism results in a deficit in the areas of Communication, Socialisation and Imagination. As a result, our child prevention programme focuses on providing a secure and transparent environment in which the children work. Whilst all of our children have a diagnosis of Autism, many also have learning difficulties. This vulnerability, particularly in the area of child protection, must be acknowledged and addressed through an appropriate Child Protection Policy (see attached Best Practice appendix).

We place great importance on the training and upskilling of staff in this area in the children's best interest.

Training has been accessed during the current academic year 2012-2013. A list of those staff who attended this training is attached.

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, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of Sonas Special Junior Primary School has agreed the following child protection policy:

1. 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 as part of this overall child protection policy.
2. Each member of staff has received a hard copy of Circular 65/2011. Each member has also received an e-copy of:
  - Circular 0065/2011
  - Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children
  - Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools
3. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Bairbre Doyle.
4. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Karen Flowers.
5. In its policies, practices and activities, Sonas will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school 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 their children: and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

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

6. The following policies in place in our school support our Child Protection Policy:
- Code of Behaviour
  - Supervision Policy
  - Social Outings Policy
  - Intimate Care Policy
  - Swimming Policy
  - Physical Contact Policy

### **Good Practice Procedures**

The staff and Board of Management of this school have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and Board of Management have agreed that the following practices be adopted:

a) **Physical Contact**

We promote the development of each child's independent skills as much as possible during the day. Staff should avoid doing anything of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. While physical contact may be used to comfort, reassure or assist a child, the following will be factors in determining its appropriateness:

- Is it acceptable to the child?
- Is it open and not secretive?
- The age and developmental stage of the child.

b) **Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs:**

Where a child is not toilet-trained/independent in the use of the toilet, they will need assistance from a staff member. On no occasion, will a staff member go into a closed toilet with a child – the door will always be left ajar.

c) **One-to-one teaching:** It is the policy of the school that one-to-one teaching is often in the best interest of the child. This teaching will take place in an open environment.

d) **Changing for Swimming**

We encourage children to dress/undress independently where possible. In the case where a child needs assistance, this is done in the communal area. The showers area is also communal.

e) **SNAs must have Garda Clearance before appointment.**

f) **Social Training and school outings: see Social Outings Policy**

While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable a full record of the incident should be made and reported to the principal and parents.

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.

7. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.
8. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

**This policy was reviewed and ratified by Sonas Board of Management on September 27<sup>th</sup> 2017**

