The BoM formally adopts and implements without modification the new “Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools” (2011) as part of their overall child protection policy. In doing so the BoM: fully implement the Stay Safe programme which is mandatory; fully implement the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme which is mandatory; use the standard template child protection policy which is in Appendix 1 of the DES Child Protection Procedures; name the DLP and deputy DLP in the school’s child protection policy; display the name of the DLP in a prominent position near the main entrance to the school and the school’s child protection policy is available to all school personnel, the parents’ association and parents via the school website and on request.

At each board of management meeting the principal’s report shall state the number of reports made to the HSE by the DLP, since the last board of management meeting. The principal’s report shall state only the number and not include any other details. The principal’s report shall also state the number of cases, since the last board meeting, where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result referrals were made.

1 DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE:

Child Abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

Neglect: can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific moment. Staff must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child is being neglected.

Emotional Abuse: occurs when a child’s need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child’s behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. A child may be affected by an event in his/her life and staff must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child’s emotional needs are being neglected.

Physical Abuse: is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Staff must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child may have been physically abused.

Sexual Abuse: occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Staff must inform the DLP if he/she is concerned or suspicious that a child may have been sexually abused.
2 DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON:
The Board of Management has appointed School Principal, Shane O’Connell as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Chairperson of BOM Lindsay Myers as the deputy DLP. The role of the DLP is to liaise with all relevant agencies, whether in seeking advice, reporting or in follow up consultations. If informed by a member of the school community of a concern the DLP should in the first instance seek advice by phone, from a senior child care officer/social worker/manager/designated person employed by TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency. At this early stage all parties including the DLP may remain anonymous and there is no requirement on the DLP to disclose the names of any party including the name of the school or her own name. However, the DLP should note the name of any TUSLA employee who gives advice. It is incumbent on the DLP to follow through on all advice from TUSLA. Written records should be kept of all phone calls and meetings.

3 BASIS FOR REPORTING TO TUSLA
TUSLA should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse. With regard to emotional abuse and/or physical neglect, consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional neglect or physical neglect would constitute reasonable grounds for concern.

4 PROCEDURES IN DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE/SUSPICION FROM A CHILD/THIRD PARTY:

- Teachers who suspect child abuse/neglect should report their concerns to the DLP at the first instance and carefully record their observations over a period of time.
- Disclosures of Child Abuse/neglect from a third party will be reported to the DLP. If a third party starts to tell a teacher about an alleged child abuse incident the teacher will ask them to speak to the DLP. If the person does not inform the DLP the teacher will do so.
- Where a child discloses alleged abuse/neglect to a staff member, the person receiving that information should listen carefully and supportively. IT IS NOT THE ROLE OF ANY STAFF MEMBER OR DLP TO INVESTIGATE AN INCIDENT/ALLEGATION/SUSPICION. HIS/HER ROLE IS TO LISTEN AND RECORD INFORMATION. Great care must be taken not to abuse the child’s trust. This should not be a formal interview.
  - Listen to the child
  - Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child
  - Offer reassurance but do not make promises
  - Do not stop a child recalling significant events
  - Do not over-react
  - Confidentiality should be assured – explain that further help may have to be sought.
  - Record the discussion accurately noting:

  What, where and when?

  Descriptions and possible sketches of physical injuries

  Explanations of injuries using direct quotations if appropriate

  Sign and date the record

  Retain the record securely
Whether cases of abuse/neglect are suspected or confirmed, confidentiality will be respected. The information on individual cases will be restricted to the teacher(s) immediately involved with the child and will be on a need to know basis.

The DLP will record the incident. It is not the function of the teacher or the DLP to investigate the issue.

If the suspected abuser is the DLP then the suspicion and any records will be passed on to the Chairperson who will proceed as per guidelines.

The Chairperson of the Board of Managements will be informed of the disclosure.

Informal contact with the designated person in TUSLA, will be made, seeking advice as to whether a referral should be made. The DLP will be explicit that s/he is requesting advice and not making a report. It is not necessary at this stage for the DLP to disclose his/her name or the name of the school.

The advice given by TUSLA must be acted upon.

If the advice is not to refer, the DLP will record this advice as the reason for non-referral. The chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed.

If the advice from TUSLA is to refer the case, the DLP will do so. However, prior to referring, the DLP will inform the parent of his/her intention to refer, unless this course of action is injurious to the child.

Following referral and the completion of the standard form, the school will have no further part to play in the investigation.

If a case conference is required, the DLP will be invited to attend.

All records will be held in a central, securely locked location.

5 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE:

- Procedures followed are similar to those of a disclosure
- Employee is made aware of the allegation against him/her
- Employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing and at a meeting of the Board of Management
- BOM meeting to review the allegation, giving due consideration to any advice given by TUSLA and Gardaí
- The BOM will consider placing the employee on administrative leave, with full pay, pending the outcome of investigations by TUSLA and Gardaí.
- On conclusion of any investigation the BOM will then determine the employment status of the employee.

6 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

Gárdha Vetting

All staff employed will not be allowed work with the children until they meet Garda vetting requirements. A copy of Garda Vetting for all teachers, substitute teachers and employees will be kept on file in the principal's office.

Supervision

School supervision policy and routines will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks.
Behaviour

Children are to be encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school yard/garden. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, or outside the school building where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the school yard/garden or to engage with adults who are outside of the school yard/garden.

Visitors

The main school entrance/exit doors are locked after the children enter the school. Visitors cannot enter the school without using the intercom (fitted at the main entrance doors) and giving their reason for entry.

Swimming

Specific procedures on swimming will be developed before the class participates in any swimming lessons.

Children travelling in staff cars

Teachers will not carry children alone in their cars. At least two children must travel with the teacher in the car or another adult and child.

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of this policy and the Children First Guidelines (1999).

Dealing with children on a one-to-one basis

If a staff member/visiting professional such as Speech and Language therapist/ Occupational therapist has to work/deal/communicate with children on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open. If the door is closed the classroom activity must take place in a part of the classroom visible from the glass partitions which have been fitted in the doors of all rooms.

Attendance

With regards to child protection we will pay particular attention to trends in non-attendance. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/ physical/ emotional abuse.
7 TOILETING ACCIDENTS:

- Parents will be requested to supply clean underwear, wipes, track-suit bottoms etc. for their child to be kept in the school.
- As a backup the a supply of clean underwear, wipes, track-suit bottoms etc. will be kept in the school.
- In the first instance, the pupil will be offered fresh clothing to clean and change themselves.
- If, for any reason, the child is unable to clean or change themselves then another child will assist. (buddy system)
- If there is a second adult present in the building then a member of staff will assist in the presence of the buddy.
- If there are two other adults in the building and help is required the adults can assist (without the need for the buddy system)
- Parents will be notified of these accidents.
- A record of the incident will be kept.

8 RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Galway Steiner National School on the 24 October 2016

Signed: _______________________________________

Lindsay Myers
Chairperson

To be reviewed: October 2017
Appendix 1: Flowcharts of Guidelines for Reporting Concerns

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Guidelines for Class Teachers

Concern

Speak with parent and report to DLP

Satisfied with outcome

Yes

No

Speak with DLP

Satisfied with outcome

Yes

No

Speak to TUSLA and make a report

If making a report, the DLP and parent(s) of the child should be informed (unless the child is deemed to be at further risk by the disclosure)
Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Guidelines for SNAs, Volunteers in the school and Teachers who are not class teachers

Concern

Speak with class teacher

Satisfied with outcome

Yes

No

Speak with DLP

Satisfied with outcome

Yes

No

Speak to TUSLA and make a report

If making a report, the DLP, class teacher and parent(s) of the child should be informed. (unless the child is judged to be at further risk by the disclosure)

There should be clear and documented agreement that the solution is resolved, further observation will be carried out or a report is made.
Appendix 2: Standard Form for Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns

Guidance Notes:

The Standard Report Form should be used by professionals, staff and volunteers in organisations working with or in contact with children, or providing services to children when reporting child protection and welfare concerns. If a report is made by telephone, this form should be completed and forwarded subsequently to the Child and Family Agency.

If a child is in danger outside office hours you can contact the Gardai.

Under The Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, so long as you report what you believe is true and it is done in good faith you cannot be sued.