



Avoca National School S. N. PHÁDRAIG NAOFA

Scoil N. Phádraig Naofa,  
Avoca,  
Co. Wicklow.

Roll No 18198A

### Garda Vetting Policy

The Garda Vetting Policy operates in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy which serves to ensure the safety of all children in the school. The staff and Board of Scoil Náisiunta Phadraig Naofa, endeavour to keep potential unsupervised access to children to a minimum. This is as much for the safety of the children as for the adults who may find themselves on their own with a child or children. The Board and staff fully recognise the limitations of Garda Vetting and realise that it does not provide clearance for any individual.

Since the introduction of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012-2016, there is a now statutory requirement that people who carry out *relevant work* (i.e. work that involves regular and necessary access to and/or contact with children and/or vulnerable adults) must be vetted prior to commencing employment or relevant volunteer work. Criminal offences will now apply to Boards of Management in the event of failure to comply **with these requirements**.

As it is now compulsory for all persons who are in contact with children in a school to be garda vetted – DES Circular - Circulars 0031/2016 and Circular 0094/2006 it is the policy of Scoil Náisiunta Phadraig Naofa, Avoca to Garda Vet any individual who may find themselves in a position on their own with a child or children. This includes members of the Board of Management and non-teaching staff.

### Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that the school is a safe and secure environment for the children in our school
- That Garda Vetting is part of the wider process ensuring the protection and safety of all members of the school community.

### What is Garda Vetting?

Under the Vetting Act, there is now a statutory requirement that those who are **currently employed in or by the school or volunteering with the school should be garda vetted**. Schools and boards of management must therefore ensure compliance with

retrospective vetting requirements as failure to do so is a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to €10,000 or a prison term of up to 5 years or both.

All registered teachers (including resource and learning support) who have not been vetted to date will be retrospectively vetted by the Teaching Council in the context of their annual renewal of registration. Scoil Náisiunta Phadraig Naofa, Avoca has conducted retrospective vetting for all special needs assistants, ancillary staff and volunteers (carrying out 'relevant work' and who commenced their role pre April 2016).

### **The Process**

The process of Garda Vetting is carried out by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU). The function of the GCVU is to provide details of '*all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, and/ or convictions*' in respect of an applicant to a registered organisation. Under the new legislation statutory vetting will now include a check for any relevant "soft information" - which is information other than criminal convictions held by the Garda Síochana that leads to a bona-fide belief that a person poses a threat to children or vulnerable persons.

### **E-Vetting Procedure**

Those who wished to be vetted must now ensure that they complete an *Invitation to Vetting form (NVB 1 form)*. This form should be returned to the school (where applicants will be working/volunteering) along with proof of identification and proof of address. The identification provided must be accepted under the *NVB 100* point check list attached below. The identification is verified by the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Management who will then forward the application to the national office for processing. The applicant will then receive a link by email inviting them to complete their online NVB 2 application form. Further details on the process can be found in the ***Brief Guide to Garda Vetting*** below.

**Please note that we cannot accept applications from individual applicants directly. Paper NVB2 forms are no longer accepted.**

### **Vetting of Minors**

The National Vetting Bureau permits the vetting of those over the age of 16 years old. Where an application is being made for a 16/17 year old, consent of the parent/guardian must also be obtained. **All applications for people under 18 years old must be accompanied by a Parent/Guardian Consent form (NVB 3).**

Schools should also ensure that the email address and contact number provided on the *Invitation to Vetting form (NVB 1)* is the email address and contact number of the parent/guardian and not of the young person.

Where minors apply for work experience in this school as part of a Transition Year Programme, it is the duty of the Transition Year Co-Ordinator to provide proof of Garda Vetting before the school can approve this work experience. This applies to applicants who will be 16 years or over at the time that they will be engaging in the work experience.

## **Vetting Disclosures**

It is important to note that the National Vetting Bureau does not provide clearance for persons to work with children in a school.

Schools have an obligation to manage Garda Vetting (GV) applications within a human rights, legislative and natural justice framework. They also have obligations under data protection legislation. It is essential to stress that school Boards of Management must make their own decisions in relation to the suitability or otherwise of prospective employees or volunteers for employment. The fact that a person has been vetted by the National Vetting Bureau does not mean that the person is suitable and does not remove the necessity for the Board to thoroughly check the background and references of a candidate [2]. A selection board must assure themselves that the candidate can be trusted to do the job within the ethical standards of the school.

Schools should also ensure that their vetting policies are updated to reflect the changes in legislation and are ratified by the Board of Management of the school.

[1] The vetting of teaching posts is the responsibility of the Teaching Council.

[2] Such a check should include - but not be restricted to - a detailed review of the candidate's CV against the chronology supplied in the vetting form and a careful discussion with at least one recent employer covering a substantial portion of the candidate's work history.

### **Substitute Teachers**

Substitute teachers should present copies of their Garda Clearance before they report for work. They should also sign a statutory declaration form prior to commencement of the working day.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Náisiunta Phadraig Naofa, Avoca Co. Wicklow at their meeting of November 10<sup>th</sup> 2020.

Marian Canavan *Marian Canavan* Date- 10/11/20

Chairperson

Mary Cahill *Mary Cahill* Date-10/11/20

Principal