

Scoil Chormaic
COMMUNITY NATIONAL SCHOOL
SCOIL NAISIÚNTA POBAIL



Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin
Baile Stiofán, Baile Brigín, Co. BÁC

Playground Supervision Policy

2023 onwards

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Introductory Statement

Scoil Chormaic CNS was established in 2010. It is under the patronage of Dublin Dún Laoghaoire Education and Training Board. This policy outlines the school's measures to ensure appropriate supervision in the playground during the school day.

Rationale

The staff and management of Scoil Chormaic CNS acknowledge the importance of providing a safe and secure environment for all of the children in the school. Every effort is made to ensure that the children are adequately supervised while they are engaged in break-time activities. This document provides guidance on how supervision will be organised and maintained on the playground and in classrooms during break-time.

For information outlining procedures to be followed in the event of playground behaviour incidents, staff should refer to the school *Code of Positive Behaviour*.

Context

Rules 121 (4) and 124 (1) of the Rules for National Schools and Section 23 (2) of the Education Act 1998 oblige teachers to take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of pupils and to participate in supervising pupils when the pupils are on school premises, during school time and/or on school activities. Accordingly, the responsibility of all teachers individually and collectively to provide a duty of care at all times towards the pupils in the school in which they teach, including periods of supervision remains.

SNA staff are required to do daily playground supervision as part of their role.

Circulars 16/73 and 29/03 stipulate that the overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of school supervision rests with the Principal teacher. In Scoil Chormaic CNS *administrative* functions relating to playground supervision have been delegated to the ISLT. These duties include the designation of play areas and equipment and drawing up an annual supervision rota. Supervision bags are maintained by individual staff.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that each pupil is afforded the opportunity to play with other pupils in a safe and non-threatening environment in the school playground. The staff and management of Scoil Chormaic CNS are cognisant of the need to balance the break-time care-needs of pupils with the provision of space for play and exercise. Therefore, the policy affords due attention to necessary health and safety precautions, and also provides guidance on how positive play may be promoted on the playground.

Playground Supervision Details

Rostering

Due to the INTO's acceptance of the Haddington Road agreement, it is presumed that all teachers will engage in mandatory supervision (as of September 2013). In line with Circular 33/2013¹, the maximum hours for which a single teacher can be rostered is 43.²

The supervision rota will be available to all staff on the school drive. A copy of the supervision rota will be shared using school email.

It is important to note that mandatory supervision as outlined in Circular 33/2013 applies **equally** to **all** teaching staff, including those in management positions or in contracts shorter than the full-time 25 hour teaching week.

In the case of **part-time teachers** or **teachers shared between schools**, supervision slots will be allocated on a case by case basis, in consultation with the Principal and ISLT, bearing in mind the individual teacher's base school and hour allocation to Scoil Chormaic CNS.

There will be 3 teachers on supervision at each break, two on the playground and one in The Den.

The playground supervision rota will be issued in September, January and April each year.

Cover for absent colleagues

In the case of pre-planned short or one-off **teacher absences** (e.g. EPV days, planned leave), teachers should organise a swap or cover for their playground supervision duty.

In the event of unplanned short or one-off teacher absences teachers should either 1. Organise cover / a swap or 2. Ask the Principal to ask for cover when informing the Principal of their absence.

If staff wish to do so, they can buddy up with another teacher and make a local arrangement for cover when absent.

In line with the mandatory nature of playground supervision (C.F. Section 4 above), it is anticipated that any substitute teacher employed on more than a casual basis will provide cover for the teacher he/she is replacing.

Additional teachers that join the staff will be assigned playground supervision on a case by case basis.

¹ Available at: http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0033_2013.pdf

² This amount of hours also includes cover for colleagues' absences arising from uncertified sick leave, which is no longer covered by paid substitutes (for *any* day of the absence). From 2014/2015 these hours also include cover for the first day of force majeure and illness in the family leave. In effect, these are hours spent on supervising split classes. The exact working of these hours has not been clarified by the DES or the INTO.

Playground Bags

Every staff member should have a playground bag containing the following items;

- Behaviour Slips
- Accident Slips
- Antiseptic wipes
- Pen

Supplies for playground bags can be found in the Den and in the Staffroom.

Inclement Weather

On days where the weather precludes pupils from playing outside, the principal/deputy principal will announce via the PA system/email that they are to remain inside.

If pupils are called in due to inclement conditions *during break*, having already gone outside, the teachers on supervision will instruct the children to line-up. The supervising teachers will then lead the pupils to the appropriate part of the school, in line with the location the teacher has been scheduled to supervise on the rota.

Pupils should engage in activities in their classroom on wet days, e.g. board games, quiet reading, drawing, colouring books etc. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to inform pupils about appropriate activities for indoor play during inclement weather.

Positive Behaviour in the Playground

The staff and management of Scoil Chormaic CNS acknowledge the importance of positive playground interactions for pupils and adults alike. These positive interactions support socialisation and inclusion, and can provide the skills that pupils need to have constructive and friendly relationships both inside and outside school. In line with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, emphasis is placed on accentuating positive behaviour at all opportunities. However, sanctions for inappropriate or dangerous behaviour are also employed.

Our school is committed to the use of Restorative Practice and we use strategies from the Restorative Practice Programme when managing conflict.

Supervising staff use Restorative Conversations with pupils in the playground to support conflict resolution.

Other strategies which may be used in response to challenging behaviour include; a verbal reminder of expected behaviours, time out in the playground, pupil required to walk with an adult.

In the event that a pupil's behaviour poses a danger to themselves or others, they may be required to remain indoors under the supervision of the teacher in the Den, or their class teacher in some circumstances.

Incidences of challenging behaviour should be recorded on a behaviour slip. These slips should be given to the pupil's class teacher and stored in the pupil's blue file in the classroom. These slips should be kept in the pupil's file for the duration of their time in the school and may be required to examine patterns in behaviour if challenging or poor behaviour is an ongoing occurrence.

Teachers are also expected to promote positive playground interactions through explicit teaching in SPHE and incidental teaching in classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to teach playground games, and to practise lining up and moving to and from the playground with the children in their class.

Individual Behaviour Plans

In the case of a pupil for whom an individual behaviour plan is in place, the steps outlined in the plan should be followed. Such plans are disseminated to all supervising teachers, where relevant.

In the event that a pupil has shown significant difficulty in coping with the main playground, the option of using the courtyard as a play space for the pupil will be explored.

For all other pupils, the Code of Positive Behaviour should be followed.

Behavioural incident that places the pupil him/herself, or other pupils/adults at immediate risk

- If possible, the steps outlined for a major or repeated behavioural incident should be followed. The supervising staff member should also send for support via a second supervising staff member, or the teacher supervising in the Den. Alternatively, two pupils may be sent to the Den/ Office for assistance.
- The incident should be brought to the attention of the Principal at the earliest opportunity.
- Appropriate follow-up actions should be scheduled, in line with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

Accidents on the Playground

The primary purpose of the 'Den' is to accommodate pupils who have accidents during break-time. The school has a large number of staff who are trained First Aid Responders. Where possible, a First Aid Responder will be scheduled to do their playground supervision in the Den, however not being FAR trained does not prevent a staff member from being rostered to the Den.

The following steps should be followed if a pupil has an accident on the playground:

1. Accidents should be recorded quickly and in brief by the supervising staff member on the accident slip found in the supervision bag. If the pupil has a minor graze (a wound this is not actively bleeding), he/she may be provided with an antiseptic wipe to clean the graze on the playground and can return to play.
2. Otherwise, the pupil should be sent to the Den, accompanied by another child. The accident slip should be sent with the child to ensure the teacher in the Den is informed of necessary details.
3. Once in the Den, the supervising teacher at the location should appraise the pupil's injury (see procedures for dealing with injuries in the First Aid Information in the Den).
4. An accident report form should be filled in for all pupils that report to the Den with an injury. These forms are stored in the folder in the Den.
5. If the teacher in the Den deems it necessary, they may make contact with a First Aid Responder, who will come to the Den and assess the pupil's condition.
6. If the Den teacher deems it necessary to make contact with the pupil's parents/guardians, they can do so using the phone in Meeting Room 1.
7. In the case of all head injuries, an accident report form (located at all First Aid points) should be completed by the Den teacher and the parents/guardians of the pupil must be contacted to inform them that their child has sustained a head injury.

Staff are not expected to make final judgments of any serious nature on a pupil's wellbeing, or on the severity of an injury (beyond minor cuts and grazes).

If a staff member is in doubt, or if emergency medical attention is required, the teacher should call a First Aid Responder and the Principal (or Deputy Principal in her absence) should be made aware of his/her concerns.

Unless it is an immediate emergency, the pupil's parents/guardians will make the ultimate decision on any necessary medical action.

Children with Medical Conditions

Staff should familiarise themselves with **pupils with specific medical requirements** (e.g., asthma, allergies) from other classes. A list of pupils with specific medical conditions can be found in the Den in a wallet folder behind the First Aid Equipment box.

Toileting during Break-Time

Teachers should provide adequate opportunities for pupils to use the bathroom during class-time.

Pupils are discouraged from using the toilet during break time. However, when it is apparent that a pupil has a genuine need to use the bathroom, the following should take place:

Use of the Den

- The pupil is paired with another child and sent to the Den or an SNA may accompany a child to the Den.
- The pupil should inform the supervising staff member when they have returned

Break Times and Playground Spaces

Due to the large number of pupils attending Scoil Chormaic, the school has decided to introduce split breaks in order to ensure the pupil's safety at break times. All pupils will play in the main playground, unless they have a separate plan, made with the school principal, to play elsewhere.

There is a soft play area in Spraoi, which may be used by SEN pupils if needed.

- Junior Infants-2nd Class
 - First Break from 10:30-10:50
 - Second Break from 12:20 - 12:40
- 3rd - 6th Class
 - First Break from 11:00 - 11:20
 - Second Break from 12:50-13:10

Entry and Exit from playground

Classes should use the appropriate entry and exit points for the playground.

Before exiting the playground, pupils should line up on the line that corresponds with the number on their classroom door.

- Junior Infants: Exit door beside the school hall
- Senior Infants: Exit door beside the school hall
- 1st Class: Exit door beside Spraoi classrooms
- 2nd Class: Exit door beside Spraoi classrooms
- 3rd Class: Exit door beside Spraoi classrooms
- 4th Class: Exit door beside Spraoi classrooms
- 5th Class: Exit door beside the school hall
- 6th Class: Exit door beside the school hall

Morning Supervision

In order to ensure the safety of pupils arriving to school in the morning, pupils will be supervised in their classrooms between 8:45 and 9:00am. A morning supervision rota will be circulated to all staff, will be available on the drive and be circulated by school email. Any behavioural incidents that take place during morning supervision should be reported to the class teacher upon their arrival at 9:00am.

Success criteria

This policy will be deemed to have been successful if:

- Pupils, for the most part, play positively in the playground
- The risk of accidents or behavioural incidents in the playground are reduced, and occur only rarely.

Implementation

Roles and responsibilities

- All Staff: Making all reasonable efforts to ensure children's safety while on the playground, in line with agreed procedures in this policy. **All staff (teaching staff and SNA staff) have responsibility for carrying yard bags and giving playground slips.**
- ISLT: Maintaining the playground supervision rota and morning supervision rota.
- Principal: Supporting staff in dealing with accidents, emergencies, and behavioural issues, as they apply to the playground.

Timeframe

This policy has been revised in the 2022-2023 school year. It will be implemented in its entirety once agreed by the Board of Management.

Monitoring

Implementation of the policy will be monitored by the principal, and where appropriate, ISLT.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in light of events that may impact on its working.

Ratification and communication

This policy has been communicated directly to staff in the course of staff meeting, and will be made available electronically also. A hard copy will be available alongside other school policies.

Signed by 29 August 2023

Colm Kilgallon

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Deirdre Corcoran

Principal of Scoil Chormaic CNS