



Knocknacarra Educate Together
National School

Garda Vetting Policy

This policy has been formulated by Knocknacarra ETNS to establish guidelines regarding Garda Vetting as specified in the Child Safeguarding Statement.

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Introductory Statement

Knocknacarra Educate Together National School is a primary school which operates under the ethos of Educate Together which is based on the following principles: equality-based, co-educational, child-centred and democratically run.

This policy reflects the underlying philosophy that Knocknacarra Educate Together NS promotes the general welfare, health, development and safety of children in an environment where mutual respect and self-esteem are nurtured and in line with the ethos of our school. It is the shared concerns and expectations of the children, parents, staff and management that create the unique character of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS.

Aims

The Board of Management:

- recognises that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- will fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
- will adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm; and
- will fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with Garda vetting and child protection matters.

Procedures

All members of the school community who have necessary, regular access to children will have undergone successfully the Garda Vetting process prior to commencement of employment or relevant volunteer work in the school. They will be re-vetted on a regular basis every two years. This is a statutory requirement.

The school will use Garda Vetting as part of a wider process to ensure the protection and safety of all members of the school community.

The process of Garda Vetting is carried out by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU), with **the assistance of the Educate Together National Office acting as school patron**. The function of the GCVU is to provide all details of ***'all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, and/or convictions'*** in respect of an applicant to a registered organisation. Because this process only reports prior prosecutions, it is not sufficient to use Garda Vetting alone without also implementing a robust system of checking references. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Principal and/or Board members to check all references and ensure all individuals have the proper credentials before allowing unsupervised access to children. In the case of substitute teachers, while it will be standard practice to check references to the best of the school's ability, this may not always be possible for casual substitutes. All substitutes will have Garda Vetting, will complete a statutory declaration and will be recognised by the Teaching Council.

All offers of employment to non-teaching staff and volunteers are subject to satisfactory vetting by the Garda Central Vetting Unit. Vetting must be renewed every two years. In the case of student teachers

and those on work placements, current vetting certificates will be accepted if accompanied by ID and proof of address that are issued by the organisation arranging the placement. Vetting disclosures for visiting teachers and coaches that have been issued by their own organisations will also be accepted in the same manner.

The e-vetting application process is now fully implemented. Firstly, a candidate for Garda Vetting must complete a paper form as well as supply the required documentation to prove identity (see the appropriate forms at <https://www.educatetogether.ie/school-boards/vetting/>). Failure to complete the Garda Vetting form will automatically disqualify the candidate. The provision of inaccurate information on the Garda Vetting Application form, such as an inaccurate date of birth or address, may also disqualify. The information on this form will be submitted to Educate Together by the principal after the document checks are complete. Educate Together will then send a link to the candidate for a more extensive online form to be completed by the candidate. Once it is processed, the vetting disclosure is securely emailed to the school.

Candidates will be able to challenge the information provided by the GCVU to avoid errors or cases of mistaken identity. In such cases, re-vetting will take place. All GV forms and disclosures will be handled in strictest confidence. Completed forms and disclosures will only be retained by the school in the event of a successful appointment and will be filed and retained in a secure location. In all decisions, it is recognised that the school will take as its first priority its responsibility to protect children attending school activities.

Renters who use the school premises outside of school hours must declare that all adults working with children have current Garda vetting.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management before 2024 or earlier if the need arises and in line with any change in legislation.

Ratification by the Board of Management

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the date below. It will be reviewed on an annual basis. The policy is available on the school website as well as available upon request.

Paul Adams, Chairperson

Date of ratification: 15/12/2021