



## **Garda Vetting Policy**

### **Our School**

Ashbourne Educate Together N.S is a multi-denominational co-educational school that will cater for pupils from Junior Infants up to Sixth class. Our school is under the patronage of Educate Together. Our school is based on the four key principles; we are equality based, learner centred, co-educational and democratically run.

### **Rationale:**

It is the intention that all members of the school community who have unsupervised access to children have undergone the Garda Vetting process, and will be re-vetted on a regular basis. This 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 Garda Vetting Policy operates in conjunction with the Child Safeguarding Statement which serves to ensure the safety of all children in the school.

The process of Garda Vetting is carried out by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) and this is done via the Teaching Council for all teachers and via our Patron Educate Together for all other workers in the school. 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.

The Garda Vetting Officer in Ashbourne Educate Together is Barbara Nugent.

### **Aims:**

The aims of the policy are:

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

### **The Policy:**

All offers of employment to non-teaching staff and volunteers are "subject to satisfactory vetting by the Garda Central Vetting Unit". 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.

Candidates will be able to challenge the information provided by the GCVU especially to avoid errors or cases of mistaken identity. In such cases, re-vetting will take place.

All returned GV forms and shared links via Digitary (for teachers) will be handled in strictest confidence. Completed Forms will only be retained by the school in the event of a successful appointment and will be appropriately retained in a secure location.

In all decisions, it is recognised that the school will take as its first priority its responsibility to the protection of children attending school activities.

*\* Volunteer roles which require Vetting, as specified in the Act and in the DES circular 0031/2016 include volunteers who assist the school on a regular basis (rather than occasional) and whose role involves coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children. Roles which do not fall into these categories may not require Vetting.*

## **E-Vetting Process**

### ***Ancillary Staff***

Ancillary staff employed by the school must complete a Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 and furnish the school with their identification, as well as proof of address. The school will then complete the Garda Vetting Verification ID Form NVB100. The Garda Vetting Verification ID Form, and the completed Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 form will then be entered onto the online portal for Garda Vetting. Ancillary Staff are responsible for completion of the remainder of the online NVB2 form. Following satisfactory vetting, their Garda Vetting disclosure letter will then be stored securely.

### ***Teaching Staff***

Each teacher must provide the school with their Garda Vetting from the Teaching Council. Disclosure letters, which are issued digitally by the National Vetting Bureau, will be printed and stored securely in their personal files.

As an additional safeguard a Statutory Declaration and Form of Undertaking must be completed and provided to the school.

### ***Substitute Teacher (Regular/Casual) and College Students***

For substitute teachers, the school is required to obtain a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau, prior to the commencement of employment.

### ***Teaching Placement***

The Garda Vetting is provided by the student teacher from the university to the school prior to the commencement of employment.

### ***Special Needs Assistants***

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) employed by the school must complete a Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 and furnish the school with their identification, as well as proof of address. The

school will then complete the Garda Vetting Verification ID Form. The Garda Vetting Verification ID Form, and the completed Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 will then be entered onto the online portal for Garda Vetting. SNA Staff are responsible for completion of the remainder of the online NVB2 form. Following satisfactory vetting, their Garda Vetting disclosure letter will then be stored securely.

### ***Substitute SNA***

Substitute SNAs must complete a Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 and furnish the school with their identification, as well as proof of address. The school will then complete the Garda Vetting Verification ID Form. The Garda Vetting Verification ID Form, and the completed Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 form will then be entered onto the online portal for Garda Vetting. SNA Staff are responsible for completion of the remainder of the online NVB2 form. Following satisfactory vetting, their Garda Vetting disclosure letter will then be stored securely.

### ***Work Experience, SNA Training***

Substitute SNAs must complete a Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 and furnish the school with their identification, as well as proof of address. The school will then complete the Garda Vetting Verification ID Form. The Garda Vetting Verification ID Form, and the completed Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 form will then be entered onto the online portal for Garda Vetting. SNA Staff are responsible for completion of the remainder of the online NVB2 form. Following satisfactory vetting, their Garda Vetting disclosure letter will then be stored securely.

### ***Transition year students work experience***

Transition year students must complete a Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 and a NVB3 parental consent form and furnish the school with their identification, as well as proof of address. The school will then complete the Garda Vetting Verification ID Form. The Garda Vetting Verification ID Form, and the completed Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 form will then be entered onto the online portal for Garda Vetting. The student and parent/guardian is responsible for completion of the remainder of the online NVB2 form. Following satisfactory vetting, their Garda Vetting disclosure letter will then be stored securely.

The email address on the NVB1 form should be the parent/guardian.

If the student is under 16 they cannot be vetted, instead the Board of Management will approve their role within the school.

The NVB3 form must be completed for any students under 18.

### ***Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Carer(s)***

If Parents are going to help out on a regular/ongoing basis (weekly) they will then need to complete the Garda Vetting Verification ID Form. The Garda Vetting Verification ID Form NVB100, and the completed Vetting Invitation Form NVB1 form will then be entered onto the online portal for Garda Vetting. Parents/Guardians/Carers are responsible for completion of the remainder of the online NVB2 form. Following satisfactory vetting, their

Garda Vetting disclosure letter will then be stored securely in a parents/carers Garda Vetting file.

### **Other**

Members of organisations working in the school (e.g. sports coaches, music teachers etc.) must provide their vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau prior to commencing work in the school. Such members of the school community will not have unsupervised access to school pupils.

Members of organisations working at the school in an after-school capacity (eg. drama class, after-school care etc.) are responsible for Garda Vetting through their own organisations, as such activities take place outside of school hours.

### **Exceptions**

The Vetting Act allows for some limited exemptions to the requirement under section 12 of the Act to obtain a vetting disclosure from the Bureau. These exemptions provide that the school authority is not required to obtain a vetting disclosure under the Act prior to commencing the contract, permission or placement in the following circumstance: ***in the case of unpaid volunteers who assist the school on an occasional basis (3 times per school term) provided such assistance does not involve the coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children or vulnerable persons. These persons would not be left unsupervised with students.***

### **Dealing with Disclosures**

If a Garda Vetting form is returned with a disclosure (i.e. a record of all prosecutions/charges, successful or not, pending or completed and/or convictions), the chairperson must bring the matter to the Selection Board (in the case of recruitment) or the Garda Vetting sub-committee (Principal/Deputy Principal BOM Nominee), in the case of a volunteer. They must then decide whether to proceed with the appointment/volunteer(s) or not.

In deciding whether a particular disclosure renders a candidate/volunteer unsuitable for selection, the school will have regard to:

- The nature of the disclosure and its possible relevance to the post
- The date of the offence and the age of the candidate at the time of the offence (offences many years in the past may be less relevant than more recent offences)
- The frequency of the offence (a series of offences will give more cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction)

The primary criterion in assessing the significance of a conviction or any other aspect of a disclosure is its relevance to child protection. An objective and balanced approach is critical in this regard.

In the case of a disclosure in relation to an otherwise suitable candidate who has been recommended for appointment, the selection board/ Board of Management will meet with the candidate/volunteer (as outlined above) to discuss the disclosure. In this case, the

responses of the candidate/volunteer should be written down verbatim and retained for future reference.

If the facts of the disclosure are seriously disputed e.g. disputed identity, the candidate/volunteer should complete a new Garda Vetting form with additional detail and the selection board/Board of Management should discuss with the authorised signatory and re vetting should take place (as outlined above).

If the selection board/Board of Management decides to proceed with the appointment the Garda Vetting form will be placed in a signed and sealed envelope in the candidate's/volunteer's personal file and retained in a secure, confidential location in the school.

If the appointment is not approved, the Garda Vetting form should be securely destroyed.

**Re-Vetting:**

All vetted personnel can be re-vetted at any time at the discretion of the Board. To ensure ongoing safeguards are in place regarding adults engaged in unsupervised access to children at our school, periodic random re-vetting will be carried out.

**Policy Review:**

This Policy was reviewed in December 2022. This policy will be reviewed as necessary and particularly to comply with any relevant legislative changes or new DES guidelines or circulars.

**Policy Ratification:**

Ratified by: Ashbourne Educate Together Board of Management: December 2022

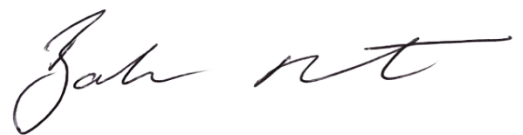
Signed:



Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 1/12/22

Signed:



Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 1/12/22