

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In recent years, as a society, we have become very aware of the problem of child abuse through neglect\*, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

\*Neglect could include

- Child being absent or late **regularly**
- Being picked early or too late **regularly**
- The basic necessities for school not being provided
- Dirty clothing, bad hygiene or headlice on an **on-going basis**
- Medical help not being sought even when illness has been pointed out

Each one of us has a duty to protect children and *Children First* (the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children) noted that teachers, who are the main care givers to children outside the family, are particularly well placed to observe and monitor children for signs of abuse.

In response to this, the Department of Education and Science published Guidelines and Procedures for all schools in relation to child protection and welfare. These guidelines promote the safety and welfare of all children and are to be welcomed.

The Board of Management of St. Ronan's School has adopted these guidelines as school policy. Consequently, if school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child abuse they are obliged to refer this matter to the Health services Executive (H.S.E.). The H.S.E. will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

*Children First*, the National Guidelines for the Protection of Children may be accessed on the website of the Department of Education and Children ( [www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie) ) and the Department of Education and Science Child Protection Guidelines can be read on the Department's website ( [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) ). Parents/Guardians are also welcome to look through the guidelines here at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Áinnle O'Neill (Principal)

Board of Management