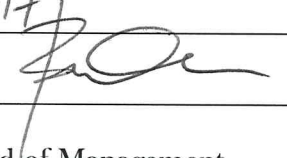




BLESSINGTON EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL

GARDA VETTING POLICY

Ratified by Board of Management on:			
Date:	1/2/17	Date:	4/4/17
Signed:		Signed:	L Steed
Chairperson, Board of Management		Principal LYNN STEED.	

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1.0 RATIONALE

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 Blessington Educate Together National School (BETNS) 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.

All members of the school community who have necessary and regular access to, or contact with children must have successfully undergone Garda Vetting prior to commencement of employment or relevant volunteer work in the school. In the future staff 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.

This process should be read alongside the following:

- Appendix A: Vetting Invitation Form NVB 1
- Appendix B: Parent/Guardian Consent Form NVB 3
- Appendix C: Garda Vetting Verification ID Form
- Educate Together Garda Vetting Guidelines
- DES Circular 0031/2016

The Board and staff fully recognise the limitations of Garda Vetting and realise that it does not provide clearance for any individual. However, in the interest of best practice it is the policy of BETNS 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, non-teaching staff and volunteers.

2.0 AIMS

- 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.

3.0 WHAT IS GARDA VETTING

The process of Garda Vetting is carried out by the National Vetting Bureau (NVB). The function of the NVB is to provide Garda Vetting Disclosures in respect of an applicant to a registered organisation. Disclosures can be 'nil' (no record found) or consist of details of convictions, together with an ancillary or consequential orders and/or a record of any prosecutions pending and/or specified information.

4.0 PROCEDURE

- The applicant completes the Garda Vetting form, obtained from the school office, which is then sent to an Authorised Signatory in Educate Together. A valid photo ID and proof of address is also required. The Garda Vetting form is then forwarded to the GCVU.
- All rules of Data Protection will be observed in respect of any data received following a Garda Vetting;
 - Information will be obtained and processed fairly.
 - Information will be kept for a specified, explicit and lawful purpose.
 - Use of and disclosure of information obtained occurs only in ways compatible with these purposes.
 - Information will be kept safe and secure.
 - It will be retained only while necessary for the purpose obtained.
 - Information received from the Vetting Unit will be shared with the individual at their request.
- All offers of employment to non-teaching staff and volunteers are ‘subject to satisfactory vetting by the Garda vetting Unit’.
- Teaching staff are vetted separately by the Teaching Council.
- Failure to complete the Garda Vetting form will automatically disqualify the candidate. The provision of inaccurate information on the Garda Vetting form, such as inaccurate date of birth or address, may also disqualify.
- Decisions on whether to accept an applicant will involve consideration of a number of criteria as well as the Garda Vetting findings. In the case of convictions, cognisance will be taken of the nature and dates of the conviction, restorative justice and rehabilitation of offenders.
- 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.
- 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.

5.0 COMPLETING A GARDA VETTING FORM

Step One: Invitation to Vetting

The school provides the vetting applicant with the *Vetting Invitation Form NVB 1* for completion. The six pieces of information required on the vetting form are:

- 1) The applicant’s name
- 2) The applicant’s date of birth
- 3) The applicant’s email address*
- 4) The applicant’s contact number
- 5) The role the applicant is being vetted for**
- 6) The applicant’s current address

*The applicant must ensure a valid email address is provided.

** The role must be clearly specified e.g. 'Basketball Coach' or 'Paired Reading Assistant' etc. If the applicant carries out multiple roles you should state the one that involves most contact with children. Generic terms such as "Volunteer" will not suffice.

Step Two: Validation of Identity

School Staff must ensure that the *Vetting Invitation Form NVB 1* has been completed, signed and dated by the vetting applicant and that the declaration box is ticked.

At this point in the process school staff must also validate the identity of the vetting applicant by both photographic and address documentation (see below). The principal/chairperson responsible for Garda vetting in the school should complete the Garda Vetting Verification ID Form.

The school will ensure a copy of the documentation used to validate the identity along with a copy of the invitation form is retained for their records. Proof of identity does not need to be sent to the office unless requested.

Documentation accepted for Identity:

Photographic I.D.

One of the following can be accepted:

- Current Passport
- Current Driving Licence or Learner Permit
- Irish Public Services card
- National Identity Card for EU/EEA/Swiss citizens

Proof of address

One of the following can be accepted:

- Utility bill (electricity, gas, television, broadband etc.) from within the last 6 months. Mobile Phone bills are not accepted.
- Statement from a bank/building society/credit union from within the last 6 months.
- P60 or P45 for the current year

In the absence of this documentation, an applicant has the option of swearing an affidavit/affirmation before a Commissioner for Oaths to verify his/her identity. There may be separate requirements by a Commissioner for Oaths in this regard.

Further information in relation to validation of identity may be found at <https://vetting.garda.ie/Help/FAQ>
The school sends the original Vetting Invitation Form NVB 1 along with the Garda Vetting Validation ID Form by post to Jessica Simpson (current liaison person) at Educate Together, Equity House, 2nd Floor, 16/17 Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin 7.

Vetting of Minors

Where an application is being made for a 16/17 year old, consent of the parent/guardian must also be obtained. This is done by asking them to complete the *Parent/Guardian Consent Form NVB 3*. In addition the email address provided on the *Vetting Invitation Form NVB 1* is the email address of the parent/guardian (not the young person).

At present, there is still ongoing clarification being sought with the DES in relation to the vetting of minors particularly in the instance of transition year students undertaking work experience within a school setting. Guidance will be provided in relation to this shortly.

Step 3: Invitation to E-Vetting Website

The liaison person reviews the *Vetting Invitation Form NVB 1*. If it is completed correctly they email the applicant (to the email address provided in the vetting invitation form) a link to the vetting website and invites him/her to complete and submit the online vetting application form *NVB 2*.

Once the vetting application form is completed and submitted online, the applicant will be issued with a reference number. It is advised that the applicant retains this number for their own records. There is also an option given for the candidate to print this reference if they wish.

Please note that the form must be completed within 30 days of receiving the email. If the applicant does not complete the form within this timeframe, it becomes invalid and they will have to re-apply.

The vetting application form is only issued to the applicant. The school does not have access to this form.

Step 4: Submission of Online Vetting Application to the NVB

Once the vetting application form *NVB 2* is completed and submitted by the vetting applicant, the form is returned to the liaison person for a final validation.

The liaison person then submits the vetting application form to the National Vetting Bureau for processing.

Step 5: Issuing of Vetting Disclosure

The National Vetting Bureau processes the application and emails a vetting disclosure (i.e. the result of the vetting application) to the liaison person.

According to the National Vetting Bureau, there is a turnaround of approximately 5 days with all online vetting applications.

The liaison person posts the original copy of the vetting disclosure to the vetting contact person in the school.

The school will be obliged to retain the copy of the vetting disclosure along with the identity documents. The school will also provide a copy of the vetting disclosure to the vetting applicant upon request.