Child Protection Policy Tobar an Léinn N.S. 2022/2023

Introductory Statement

The Board of Management, and representatives of staff and parents of Tobar An Léinn devised the following policy on child protection.

Rationale

The BOM of Tobar an Léinn N.S. has adopted the Department of Education and Science Guidelines and Procedures for schools in relation to Child Protection and Welfare. This policy is an outline of how Tobar an Léinn N.S. proposes to implement these guidelines in order to ensure the protection and welfare of all children attending our school.

This document is formulated in response to recent changes in Guidance and Procedures in relation to Child Protection matters and takes account of the provisions of each of the following important pieces of legislation:

- Freedom of Information Act 1997
- The Education Act 1998
- The Child Welfare Act 2000
- Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.

The new procedures are based on Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 and on Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

References

- 'Children First' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011)
- 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (Department of Education and Skills 2011). These will be referred to as "DES Procedures" throughout this policy.

The Board of Management (BoM) recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in each school policy, school practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills, Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the BoM of Tobar an Léinn has approved this Child Protection Policy.

The BoM has adopted and will fully implement without modification the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2011. These procedures will therefore underpin the content of this policy.

The following key personnel have been identified and ratified by the BoM:

- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Niamh Campion (Principal).
- The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Póilín Ní Leathlobhair (Deputy Principal).

In its policies, practices and activities, Tobar an Léinn will adhere to the following principles of best practice in Child Protection and Welfare. Our school recognises that

- the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations and will therefore;
- Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect
- Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters

Specific policies named hereunder are key elements of this overall document and must be referred to in the context of this policy:

- Attendance
- Enrolment
- Bullying
- Special Ed
- Induction of Staff
- Tours/Trips
- Critical Incidents
- Swimming

This policy will also be considered with reference to the participation by pupils in sporting activities, other extra-curricular activities and school outings. Other practices and activities, where child protection might have particular relevance, will have due regard to procedures outlined in this policy.

This policy is available to all school personnel and the Parent Association and is readily accessible to parents on request. It is also available in hard copy in every teacher's planning folder in every classroom in addition to every learning support / resource room. A copy of this policy is available for the attention of the DES and the patron if requested.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Tobar an Léinn N.S. seeks to help the children to grow and develop into healthy, confident, mature adults, capable of realising their full potential as human beings. We strive to create a happy, safe environment for the children where they feel secure, knowing that if they have concerns, they will be listened to with understanding and respect and they will be acted on.

Aims

- 1. To raise awareness of child abuse, namely, emotional, physical, sexual and neglect, among all the education partners in our school.
- 2. To put in place clear procedures for all school personnel dealing with suspicions and allegations of child abuse.
- 3. To identify other policy areas which need to be amended in light of the 'Child Protection Guidelines'.
- 4. To identify curricular content and resources that contribute to the prevention of child abuse and to enable children to properly deal with abuse if it occurs.

Guidelines

THE GUIDELINES ARE LAID OUT AS FOLLOWS:

- 1.0 Appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (DLP)
- 2.0 Roles, Responsibilities and Guidelines
- 2.1 Role of the Board of Management
- 2.2 Role of the Staff Members (Teachers, SNA's, Caretaker, Secretary)
- 2.3 Guidelines for recognition of Child Abuse.
- 3.0 Case Conferences
- 4.0 Organisational Implications
- 5.0 Curriculum Implications

1.0 Appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- a. The Board of Management has appointed Ms Niamh Campion (Principal) as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in Tobar an Léinn N.S to have specific responsibility for child protection.
- b. Ms. Póilín Ní Leathlobhair (Deputy Principal) has been appointed as Deputy DLP to take the place of the DLP if he is unavailable for whatever reason.
- c. Both the DLP and Deputy DLP have undertaken training from the CAPP and PDST. The CPSMA have also help training for the Board of Management on Children Protection.
- d. The position of DLP will be addressed at the first meeting of each new Board of Management. The DLP will continue to act as such until such time as he/she is replaced by the BOM for whatever reason.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities:

- The Board of Management has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their pupils.
- The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection in the school.
- All staff have a general duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect children from harm.

2.1 Role of the Board of Management

- To arrange for the planning, development and implementation of an effective child protection programme.
- To monitor and evaluate its effectiveness each year.
- To provide appropriate staff development and training

Specifically they will

Appoint a DLP and deputy DLP.

- Have clear procedures for dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse (See below)
- Monitor the progress of children at risk
- Ensure that curricular provision is in place for the prevention of child abuse.
- Investigate and respond to allegations of child abuse against one of the
- school's employees which have been reported to the Health Board or Gardai.
- To decide on teachers attendance at child protection meetings/case conferences and to advise teachers before attending such meetings/conferences

Confidentiality

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should only be shared on a'need to know' basis in the interests of the child. The giving of information to those who need to have that information is not a breach of confidentiality. This procedure exists for the protection of a child who may have been or has been abused. The DLP who is submitting a report to the Health Board or An Garda Siochána should inform a parent/guardian, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place that child at further risk.

A decision not to inform a parent/guardian should be briefly recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.

In emergency situations, where the Health Board cannot be contacted, and the child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, An Garda Siochána should be contacted. A child should not be left in a dangerous situation where Health Board intervention is not forthcoming.

Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse

The protection for persons reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to any person who reports a child protection concern 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of an Garda Siochána (DES Procedures 1:10)

Qualified Privilege

People making a report to the DLP in good faith have 'qualified privilege' under common law. Reports made to Health Boards may be subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997. This act enables members of the public to obtain access to personal information relating to them which is in the possession of public bodies. However, the act also provides that public bodies may refuse access to information obtained by them in confidence (DES Procedures 1:11)

Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

Each of these categories is defined in DES procedures (Appendix 3: Signs and symptoms of child abuse).

2.3 Guidelines for Recognition of Child Abuse

A list of child neglect indicators is contained in Chapter 2:2 of Children First. This policy draws particular attention to 'persistent evidence' of neglect, including indicators such as no lunch, lack of uniform, no homework, poor attendance, persistent health problems, lack of sleep indicating inappropriate television viewing late at night and other evidence that would indicate lack of supervision in the home. All signs and symptoms must be examined in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances.

There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse:

- 1. Considering the possibility
- 2. Looking out for signs of abuse
- 3. Recording of information Each of these stages is developed in 'Children First' (2:2)

Handling Disclosures from Children

The DES Procedures, Section 3:5, gives comprehensive details of how disclosures should be approached. Staffs are advised to deal with each situation sensitively, reassure the child but not to make promises that cannot be fulfilled. The adult should not ask leading questions or make suggestions. They should explain that further help may have to be sought. The discussion should then be recorded accurately. The record should include reference to what was observed with sketches of physical injury where necessary. It should also record when the alleged incident took place. Records should be kept in a secure place. The information should then be conveyed to the school DLP. If the reporting person and the DLP are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion/allegation, the procedures outlined in 'Children First' must be adhered to. Standardised reporting forms should be used (DES Procedures Appendix 4). The content of the report should follow the guidelines in 'Children First'.

Allegations or Suspicions in relation to School Employees (DES Procedures Chapter 5)

The Chairperson and the DLP are concerned with the protection of the children in their care in the first instance. However, employees must be protected against false and malicious claims. Due process must be observed in relation to allegations against employees. Legal Advice should be sought by the BoM in relation to an allegation in relation to an employee. If the allegation is against the DLP, the BoM Chairperson will assume the responsibility for reporting the matter to the Health Board.

Reporting

When an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee, the DLP should act in accordance with the procedures outlined in Children First. A written statement of the allegation should be sought from the person/agency making the report. A parent/guardian may make a statement on behalf of a child. The DLP should always inform the Chairperson of the BoM and is responsible for liaising with the HSE. The Chairperson assumes responsibility for dealing with the employee. School employees, other than the DLP, who receive allegations against another school employee, should immediately report the matter to the DLP. School employees who form suspicions regarding conduct of another school employee should consult with the DLP.

The employee should be informed by the Chairperson (Employer) that:

- a. An allegation has been made against him/her
- b. The nature of the allegation
- c. Whether or not the Health Board or Gardaí has been informed.

The employee should be given a copy of the written allegation and any other relevant documentation. The employee should be requested to respond to the allegation in writing to the BoM within a specified period and told that this may be passed to the Gardaí, Health Board and legal advisers. The Chairperson must take the necessary steps to protect the child and may consult the BoM in this matter. The BoM may direct that the employee take administrative leave with pay and avoid suspension,

thus removing any implication of guilt. The DES should be immediately informed.

3.0 Organisational Implications

School procedures already in place and new procedures being put in place will be examined with reference to the Children First Guidelines and any Child Protection issues that may arise will be address.

The following policies have been addressed in this review:

- Supervision Policy
- Bullying Policy
- Accidents Policy
- Swimming Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Children travelling in teachers cars
- Induction of all New Staff
- Induction of Pupils Policy
- Communication Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Special Needs Policy

Supervision

School supervision policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks and before and after school. Principal/deputy principal will be involved before/after school supervision (see rota on staff notice board). A further rota will be displayed to cover 11 o'clock and lunchtime breaks.

See supervision policy for agreed rules around break-times. See supervision policy for procedures around teacher absences.

Behaviour

Children are to be encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the schoolyard. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or sheds where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the school yard or to engage with adults who are outside of the school yard.

Visitors

Teachers on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the schoolyard and will ascertain their intentions. They will be supervised in the discharge of their business.

Bullying

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying policy. If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive then the matter will be referred to the DLP.

Accidents

While every precaution will be taken under our Health and Safety Statement to ensure the safety of children, we realise that accidents will happen. Accidents will be noted in our Incident book and will be addressed under our accident policy as part of Health and Safety.

Swimming

Children will be brought by bus to the swimming pool. Children will line up in an orderly manner for the bus as stated in our dismissal policy as part of Health and Safety. Staff who take classes swimming should make sure that there are two adults in attendance at all times. The dressing rooms and pool area should be well supervised. Parents will tend to their own children only.

Children travelling in staff cars

Teachers will not carry children alone in their cars at any time.

Record Keeping

Teachers will keep each child's file updated with results of assessments carried out, dates and details of meetings with parents and notes from parents. The records are kept in the principal's office. Attendance will be updated daily in the Alladin Roll Books. Sensitive information regarding children will be shared on a need-to-know basis. All educational files of pupils who no longer attend this school are kept in the filing cabinet in the principal's office / storeroom for a minimum of 7 years. Further details on record keeping are found in the school's Data Protection Policy.

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Child Protection Procedures (DES, 2011) and Children First Guidelines (2011), but most particularly "Children First- National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). All incoming staff will be Garda Vetted in accordance with Circular 0031/2016 All new teachers are expected to teach the objectives in the SPHE programme. The Principal is responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives. The Principal is also responsible for ensuring that new teachers know how to fill in the Alladin roll book correctly and informing the teacher of record keeping procedures within the school.

Induction of Pupils

All parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). All parents will be informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development e.g. RSE, Walk Tall and SPHE. All new parents are given a copy of the school's enrolment policy, which outlines the procedures parents and children should use when contacting the school if there are absences or concerns of an educational/personal/family matter. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their

child's progress. All parents are given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

Communication

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral English/RE programmes allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which is hoped will aid the pupil-teacher relationship. If teachers have to communicate with pupils on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open. Further details on communication are found in the school's Communication Policy.

Attendance

Our school attendance will be monitored as per our attendance policy. With regards to child protection we will pay particular attention to trends in non-attendance. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse.

Special Needs Policy

Staff should make every effort not be alone in a classroom with one child or detain a child on their own after school. In the case of children with special educational needs (ie) where resource hours and assistance are sanctioned on an individual basis, it is school policy that staff in such a situation should work with the classroom door open, thus rendering the occupants visible at all times, with exception where a glass panel door has been installed. Both the School Library and School Learning Support Room have such installed.

When possible children should work in groups.

Children with physical disabilities who may require assistance in toileting will be aided by an Special Needs Assistant who has met the necessary screening requirements when being employed by the school. This SNA can only assist with the child, once permission has been sought from parents.

4.0 Curriculum Implications

Introduction

In Tobar an Léinn N.S all children will be cherished and in fulfilling the general aims of the Revised Primary Curriculum we will:

- Enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential.
- Enable the child to develop as a social being through living and cooperating with others and so contribute to the good of society.
- Prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

In endeavouring to realise these aims we will create a positive school climate which is open, inclusive, respectful, fair, democratic and tolerant and which seeks to support the holistic development of all children and all adults working with our children. The strategies we will use to create this environment are detailed in our SPHE Plan and will involve:

- Creating a health-promoting physical environment
- Enhancing self-esteem
- Fostering respect for diversity
- Building effective communication within the school
- Developing appropriate home-school communication
- Catering for individual needs
- Developing democratic process
- Fostering inclusive and respectful language

We strive to ensure that our school will be physically and emotionally safe and we will deliver the curricular content of our SPHE programme with a view to giving our children the protective skills of self-esteem and assertiveness. The circle time methodology will be used on a whole school basis and bubble time also. The No-Blame approach will be adopted in our Anti-Bullying policy. Co-operative interpersonal skills will be developed through working in pairs and working in groups. Older children will be encouraged to work positively with conflict and negotiation and consensus building skills developed.

Junior and Senior Infants

Infant teachers will teach content objectives as laid out under the 10 strand units in our SPHE programme. They are

- Self Identity
- Taking care of my body
- Growing and changing
- Safety and protection
- Making decisions
- Myself and my family
- My friends and other people
- Relating to others
- Developing citizenship

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After discussion teachers felt that these strand units would enable children to develop assertiveness, body integrity, skills relating to self-care, respect for others, identification of feelings and skills necessary to recognise and tell of abuse.

The SPHE programme would be supported, using the Walk Tall resources, our Alive-O programme and Stay Safe resources.

1st & 2nd classes

Again teachers agreed that implementing our SPHE programme as laid out under the 10 strand units named above would enable the children to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes pertaining to self-esteem, esteem for others and the environment and skills pertaining to self-care and disclosure. Healthy eating, positive attitudes to drug use and antibullying awareness will be introduced.

The SPHE programme will be supported by using the Walk Tall resources, our Grow in Love programme, North Western Health Board materials and Stay Safe programme.

3rd and 4th classes

Our SPHE programme will again be implemented according to the 10 strand units. Knowledge, skills and attitudes developed in previous classes will be built on. Children will be enabled to develop intrapersonal skills and inter-personal skills. As children mature they will be challenged to develop their decision-making skills. They will be encouraged to develop self-protection skills pertaining to smoking and alcohol. Peer pressure and the influence of the media will also be

examined. The development of self-esteem, esteem for others, assertiveness, awareness of feelings, and skills around self-protection and disclosure will underpin our teaching.

Our SPHE programme will be supported by the use of Walk Tall resources, Prim-Ed anti-bullying materials, RSE materials and Stay Safe programme.

5th and 6th classes

Our SPHE programme will be implemented according to the curricular objectives as laid out under the 10 strands in the SPHE Revised Primary Curriculum. Skills, knowledge and attitudes developed in earlier classes will be enhanced. Children will continue to develop self-awareness and positive attitudes to themselves, others, their environment and wider world in which they live. Self protection and respect for others will be fostered, decision-making skills developed, peer influence and media bias examined. Knowledge of drugs and positive attitudes to drug use will be further developed. Children will be enabled to develop good group-building skills, anti-bullying awareness and conflict resolution skills. Self-protection will be emphasised and protection of younger, less able people. Positive attitudes to sexuality will be developed and respect for self and others fostered (see RSE policy).

The SPHE programme will be supported by the use of the Walk Tall materials, RSE resources, Stay Safe resources and North-Western Health board resources.

The Following appendices relating specifically to the School are as follows.

Appendix 1

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of its child protection policy and the following checklist shall be used for this purpose.

This Tobar an Léinn Checklist has been adapted from the 2011Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

- 1. Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?
- 2. As part of the school's child protection policy, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?
- 3. Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?
- 4. Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand?
- 5. Has the DLP attended available child protection training?
- 6. Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?
- 7. Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?
- 8. Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?
- 9. Has the Board ensured that the Department's "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools" are available to all school personnel?
- 10. Has the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school's child protection policy to new school personnel?
- 11. Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?
- 12. Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made to the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP?
- 13. Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made?

- 14. Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/ An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed?
- 15. Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?
- 16. Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?
- 17. Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), has been provided with the school's child protection policy?
- 18. Has the Board ensured that the school's child protection policy is available to parents on request?
- 19. Has the Board ensured that the Stay Safe programme is implemented in full in the school? (applies to primary schools)
- 20. Has the Board ensured that the SPHE curriculum is implemented in full in the school?
- 21. Is the Board satisfied that the Department's requirements for Garda Vetting have been met in respect of all school personnel (employees and volunteers)?
- 22. Is the Board satisfied that the Department's requirements in relation to the provision of a child protection related statutory declaration and associated form of undertaking have been met in respect of persons appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions?*
- 23. Is the Board satisfied that, from a child protection perspective, thorough recruitment and selection procedures are applied by the school in relation to all school personnel (employees and volunteers)?
- 24. Is the Board satisfied that the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools are being fully and adequately implemented by the school?
- 25. Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's child protection policy and/or its Implementation that require further improvement?
- 26. Has the Board put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the schools Child Protection Policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement?
- 27. Has the Board ensured that any areas for improvement that were identified in any previous review of the school's Child Protection Policy that have been adequately addressed?

Appendix 2

Tobar an Léinn Raheen, Mountrath, Co. Laois Phone: - 057-8731767

Re. DES GUIDELINES
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.

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 Skills published 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 Tobar an Léinn 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 Service Executive (HSE). The HSE will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

Children First, the National Guidelines for the Protection of Children may be assessed on the website of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.(www.dcya.ie) and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures can be read on the Department's website (www.education.ie). Parents/Guardians are also welcome to look through the guidelines here at the school.

Kind regards,	
Niamh Campion, Principal	

Appendix 3

Child Protection Contacts

Designated Liaison Person Ms Niamh Campion Principal

Deputy DLP
Ms Póilín Ní Leathlobhair, Deputy Principal
Abbeyleix Garda Station
Telephone: (057) 873 0580

Portlaoise Garda Station (057) 867 4100

Local Contact For 'The Children and Family Social Services of the HSE'

Child and Family Agency, Social Work Department, Child and Family Centre, Dublin Rd, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

(057) 8692567

Timeframe for Implementation

These procedures will be implemented following ratification by the BOM.

Timeframe for Review

At the first staff meeting of every year the DLP will remind all teachers of the guidelines and copies of Chapter 3 & 4 & Appendix 1 of The Children First Guidelines will be given to those who require them. A review will be conducted based on the criteria above, following any and all incidents when the guidelines are used.

Responsibility for Review

- DLP
- Principal
- All Staff
- Board of Management

Ratification and Communication

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. The policy is now available on the school website.

This policy was ratified and adopted by the Board of Management on 04/10/2022

Signed: Patrick Keyes

Date: 04/10/2022

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Niamh Campion

Date: 04/10/2022

Principal

Date of next review: October2023

The Board further endorses Niamh Campion, Principal as the school DLP and Ms Póilín Ní Leathlobhair, Deputy Principal, as Deputy DLP. On behalf of the Board of Management:

(Chairperson) Patrick Keyes