



St. Columba's College

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# Risk Assessment & Child Safeguarding Statement

Updated September 2023, next due for review 2024

Person Responsible for updating policy: Warden, Sub-Warden, Safety Officer

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## Designated Liason Persons

Designated Liaison Person:

Mr Mark Boobbyer (Warden)

Deputy Designated Liaison Person:

Mr Julian Girdham (Sub-Warden)

## Child Safeguarding Statement

St. Columba's College is a primary and post-primary school providing primary and post-primary education to pupils from Sixth Class to First Year to Leaving Certificate Year.

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of St. Columba's College has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement

**Designated Liaison Person:**

Mr Mark Boobyer

**Deputy Designated Liaison Person:**

Mr Julian Girdham

## Other Policies


The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

### The school will:

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- 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; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
- The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

### The following procedures/measures are in place:

- In relation to any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child attending the school, the school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the DES website and/or by contract between the College and its employees.
- In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, the school adheres to the statutory vetting requirements of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 and to the wider duty of care guidance set out in relevant Garda vetting and recruitment circulars published by the DES and available on the DES website.

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- In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to staff in respect of the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) the school:
    - Has provided each member of staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
    - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
    - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
    - Encourages Board of Management members to avail of relevant training
    - The Board of Management maintains records of all staff and Board member training
  - In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.
  - In this school the Board has appointed the abovenamed DLP as the "relevant person" (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of a child safeguarding statement.
  - All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.
  - In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, the Board has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the school or participating in school activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the school's procedures for managing those risks is attached as an appendix to these procedures.
  - The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school's website, the DES website or will be made available on request by the school.

## Publishing this Policy

This statement has been published on the school's website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parents' Association (if any) and the Board of Fellows. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla and the Department if requested.

## Review & Evaluation

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

## Written Assessment of Risk of St. Columba's College

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirement of Chapter 8 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of St. Columba's College.

### List of school activities

- Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one teaching
- One-to-one counselling
- Outdoor teaching activities
- Online teaching and learning remotely
- Sporting Activities
- School outings
- School trips involving overnight stay
- School trips involving foreign travel
- Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in schools
- Provision of residential facilities for boarders
- Provision for daily boarding life including exeats and overnights
- Annual Sports Day
- Fundraising events involving pupils
- Use of off-site facilities for school activities
- School transport arrangements including use of bus escorts
- Care of children with special educational needs, including intimate care where needed
- Administration of Medicine
- Administration of First Aid
- Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe
- Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils
- Training of school personnel in child protection matters
- Use of external personnel to supplement curriculum
- Use of external personnel to support sports and other extra-curricular activities
- Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/ needs such as
  - Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children
  - Pupils perceived to be LGBT
  - Pupils of minority religious faiths
- Recruitment of school personnel including -
  - Teachers/SNAs
  - Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners
  - Sports coaches
  - External Tutors/Guest Speakers
  - Volunteers/Parents in school activities
  - Visitors/contractors present in school during school hours


- Visitors/contractors present during after school activities
- Participation by pupils in religious ceremonies/religious instruction external to the school
- Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school
- Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour including detention of pupils, confiscation of phones etc.
- Students participating in work experience in the school
- Students from the school participating in work experience elsewhere
- Student teachers undertaking training placement in school
- Use of video/photography/other media to record school events
- After school use of school premises by other organisations
- Use of school premises by other organisation during school day
- Catering of meals (Breakfast/Dinner/Supper/Evening snack and breaks)

### The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities –

- Risk of harm not being recognised by school personnel
- Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by school personnel
- Risk of child being harmed in the school by a member of school personnel
- Risk of child being harmed in the school by another child
- Risk of child being harmed in the school by volunteer or visitor to the school
- Risk of child being harmed by a member of school personnel, a member of staff of another organisation or other person while child participating in out of school activities e.g. school trip, swimming lessons
- Risk of harm due to inappropriate use of online remote teaching and learning communication platform such as an uninvited person accessing the lesson link, students being left unsupervised for long periods of time in breakout rooms
- Risk of harm due to bullying of child
- Risk of harm due to racism
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children in school
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children while attending out of school activities
- Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communications between child and another child or adult
- Risk of harm due to children inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones and other devices while at school
- Risk of harm to children with SEN who have particular vulnerabilities
- Risk of harm to child while a child is receiving intimate care
- Risk of harm due to inadequate code of behaviour
- Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching, counselling, coaching situation
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel communicating with pupils in appropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner

## The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment –

- All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
- The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 are made available to all school personnel
- School Personnel are required to adhere to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the Children First Act 2015
- The school implements in full the Stay Safe Programme
- The school implements in full the SPHE curriculum
- The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which fully adheres to the requirements of the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools
- The school has a supervision policy to ensure appropriate supervision of children during assembly, dismissal and meal times
- The School has a Policy for Weekends and Evenings Duty Policy.
- The school has in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of school outings
- The school has a Health and safety policy
- The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting and has adopted an appropriate policy in this regard.
- The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
- The school has a Special Educational Needs policy
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the administration of medication to pupils
- The school –
  - Has provided each member of school staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
  - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
  - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
  - Encourages board of management members to avail of relevant training
  - Maintains records of all staff and board member training
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the administration of First Aid
- The school has in place a code of behaviour for pupils as well as a dress code
- The school has in place an ICT policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils
- The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan
- The school has in place a policy governing the use of smart phones
- The school has in place a Home School Liaison policy and related Procedures
- The school has in place a Policy on Guidance and Counselling
- The school has in place a policy on RSE
- The school has a Child Protection Working Group that meets regularly to review the risk register and the development of relevant policies.
- The school has a Cúram team that is dedicated to looking after the welfare of the children.
- The school has appropriate signage for visitors and volunteers.



Members of clubs that are authorised to use school facilities and/or any external contractors working on site from time to time are made aware of the school's child protection requirements.

**Important Note:** It should be noted that risk in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of "harm" as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and not general health and safety risk. The definition of harm is set out in Chapter 4 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools 2017

## Conclusion

In undertaking this risk assessment, the Board of Management has endeavoured to identify as far as possible the risks of harm that are relevant to this school and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage all risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, the school has in place the procedures listed in this risk assessment to manage and reduce risk to the greatest possible extent.

This risk assessment has been completed by the Board of Management on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018. It shall be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

It is the policy of St Columba's to provide the highest possible standard of academic and pastoral care for all our pupils. The College will at all times safeguard and promote their welfare by protecting them from neglect as well as physical, sexual and emotional harm, and by exposing them at every available opportunity to positive experiences.

The College believes that the protection of children is paramount and it seeks to cooperate fully with statutory authorities at all times. It wishes to minimise the possibility of harm to children and to protect its staff from accusations being made against them. Confidentiality is respected but there can be no guarantee of this where a child may be at risk.

This is the responsibility of all College personnel, and to ensure this is facilitated a Designated Liaison Person and a Deputy Designated Liaison Person are appointed and given training in their duties (these names are notified to the whole school community on the Warden's noticeboard and in the College Calendar/Green Book which is distributed annually to all pupils and parents).

The whole staff of the College, including support staff, is also given training in its responsibilities in this field and how to deal with any instances of disclosure they may encounter.

The College subscribes to and follows the procedures in the Child Safeguarding Statement, the Children First Act 2015 and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and has agreed the updated Template for Child Protection Policies, which the Warden and the Chairman of the Board of Management sign off on annually. The Warden reports issues of Child Protection and bullying to the Board of Management at each of its meetings.



## Declarations

These policies were ratified by the Board of Management on 8th December 2021.

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Chair of the Board of Management

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Secretary of the Board of Management



## Appendix 1

### Mandatory Template 3: Notification regarding the Board of Management's review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

To: SCC website

The Board of Management of St. Columba's wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement was completed at the Board meeting of 6/9/23 [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the "Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement" published on the [gov.ie](http://gov.ie) website

Signed  Date 07/09/2023

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed  Date 7/9/23

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management