Child Safeguarding Statement

St. Mary's Secondary School is a post-primary school providing post-primary education to pupils from 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 Addendum to Children First (2019), the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

1 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 *(revised 2023)* as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement

2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Mr. Robert O'Reilly**

3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Ms. Fiona Bourke**

4 The Relevant Person is **Mr. Robert O'Reilly**

(The relevant person is one who can provide information in respect of how the child safeguarding statement was developed and will be able to provide the statement on request. In a school setting the relevant person shall be the designated liaison person.)

5 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.

6 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 *(revised 2023)* and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the gov.ie website.

- 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 Department of Education and available on the gov.ie website.

- 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 (revised 2023)*, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.

- All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.

- In this school the Board has appointed the above named DLP as the "relevant person" (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the schools 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 and the Addendum to Children First (2019), 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 included with the Child Safeguarding Statement.

- The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school's website www.stmarysballina.ie , the gov.ie website or will be made available on request by the school.

- Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR): the Principal shall provide at every Board meeting a Child Protection Oversight Report,

- At each meeting of the board of management the principal must present an update on the number of incidents of bullying behaviour and the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The purpose of the update is to inform discussion at board level on the effectiveness of the measures that the school is taking to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

Awareness among students:

- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)/Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) is timetabled as core part of the school curriculum. SPHE/RSE provides students with opportunities to develop the skills and competencies to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. SPHE/RSE plays an important role in helping students recognise situations in which their personal safety might be threatened as well as providing them with the knowledge and skills to deal with unsafe, threatening or abusive situations.
- Awareness and education also occurs during regular assemblies, counselling sessions and through invited speakers for students, parents and teachers.
- Staff will make every effort to ensure that the messages of the SPHE/RSE programme are reinforced whenever possible
- Students have been informed of the wide variety of in school and out of school supports available to them through assemblies, on noticeboards, school website etc.

7 This statement has been published on the school's website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parents' Association and the patron. 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.

8 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.

Implementation and Review

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.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on **06th September 2025**

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on **06th September 2025**

Signed: _____

Fionnghuala King
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: **06th October 2025**

Signed: _____

Robert O'Reilly
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: **06th October 2025**

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of St. Mary's Secondary School, Ballina.

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirements of Chapter 8 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of St. Mary's Secondary School.

1. 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
- Sporting Activities
- Breakfast Club/Canteen
- School outings
- School trips involving overnight stay
- School trips involving foreign travel
- Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in schools
- Annual Sports Day
- Annual Christmas concert / school musical
- After school activities e.g. Bake Club, Choir, Sports
- Annual Recognitions Day
- Fundraising events involving pupils
- Use of off-site facilities for school activities
- School transport arrangements
- Care of children with special educational needs
- Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils
- Participation of students in supervised in-house examinations and mock examinations
- Participation of students in Assessment Tasks and Classroom Based Assessments as part of Junior Cycle framework
- Oral and practical examinations undertaken by students as part of State Examinations
- Use of school premises to facilitate State Examinations
- Administration of Medicine (where sanctioned by parents)
- Administration of First Aid
- Curricular provision in respect of SPHE & RSE
- 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
- Management of students who present as ill or upset

- Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/ needs such as
    - Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants
    - Members of the Traveller community
    - Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children
    - Pupils of minority religious faiths
    - Children in care
    - Children on CPNS

- Recruitment of school personnel including
    - Teachers/SNA's
    - 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 from the school participating in work experience
- 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
- Promoting student participation/student voice e.g. Student Council, Leaders
- Provision of Evening study/Homework club
- Online Teaching & Learning
- The use of students mobile phones during school hours and on school activities
- Transporting a student in a private car or other non-standard transport

This list includes most school activities, but is not exhaustive

2. 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
- Risk of harm due to bullying of child
- 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, mobile phones and other devices while at school
- Risk of harm to children with AEN 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 situations
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel communicating with pupils in an inappropriate 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
- Risk of harm with regard to online Teaching & Learning due to forced school closures
- Risk of harm due one to one online teaching, support calls or counselling sessions
- Risk of harm in situations where students are using changing facilities
- Risk of harm in situations where students are participating in swimming and outdoor pursuits
- Risk of child being harmed by non-school personnel employed by external organisations to carry out duties in the school
- The risk of harm due to transporting a student in a private car or other non-standard transport

This list includes most school activities, but is not exhaustive

3. **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 2023 are made available to all school personnel
- School Personnel are required to adhere to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023 and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the Children First Act 2015
- The school implements in full the SPHE curriculum
- The school implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle
- The school implement in full the RSE programme at Junior & Senior Level
- The school has an Bí Cinelata Policy which fully adheres to the requirements of the Department's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools
- As part of the Bí Cinelata Policy, the school has a Mind Each Other programme in place
- The school has adequate supervision to ensure appropriate supervision of children during, assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc.
- The school has a Health and Safety Policy and a Safety Statement in place
- The school has a policy on Administration of Medicines
- The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DE circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting
- Teaching staff comply with the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct
- The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
- The school has an Additional Educational Needs/Inclusion policy
- 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
    - Requires 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 code of behaviour for pupils
- The school has in place an ICT policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils
- There are procedures in place with respect to usage of mobile phones by pupils as outlined in the schools Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Policy
- Students are required to store their mobile device in a Yondr Pouch, limiting access to their device during the school day.
- When accessing school provided internet, a content filtering system in place which blocks illegal and harmful sites
- The school has an Internet and ICT Acceptable Usage Policy with respect to students' use of ICT
- The school has a Remote/Distance Learning Policy in respect of use of technology for distance or remote teaching and learning
- The school uses Microsoft Teams/school email only for online communication between staff and students

- The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan
- The school has a policy on School Tours, to include overnight trips, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland
- The school follows the Teaching Council code of conduct for school personnel
- The school has in place procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum
- The school has in place procedures for recording and storage of student CBA presentation
- The school has in place procedures for the use of external sports coaches
- The school has in place clear procedures for one-to-one teaching activities
- The school has in place procedures for one-to-one counselling
- The school has in place procedures in respect of pupils of the school undertaking work experience in external organisations
- Guidance counsellor abides by IGC Code of Ethics & practice
- The school has in place a Student Wellbeing subcommittee
- A dedicated supervisor will provide open supervision of common areas in student toilet blocks
- Where feasible, the school will put enhanced supervision in place around the blocks.
- The school permits students to wear their PE uniform on the day when they have PE/sporting activities therefore reducing the need to use the changing facilities
- Where students are participating in swimming & outdoor pursuits, adequate supervision is provided to ensure no bullying occurs and that all children are safe from external personnel
- All personnel working in the school have been Garda Vetted
- If a student must be transported in a private car or other non-standard transport, the following must apply: The student must be accompanied by either:
    - One additional staff member, or
    - Two additional students.

This list includes most school activities, but is not exhaustive

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 (revised 2023)*

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.

Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) require that the Board of Management must undertake a review of its Child Safeguarding Statement and that the following checklist shall be used for this purpose. **The review must be completed every year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the Child Safeguarding Statement refers.** Undertaking an annual review will also ensure that a school also meets its statutory obligation under section 11(8) of the Children First Act 2015, to review its Child Safeguarding Statement every two years.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list of the issues to be considered. Individual Boards of Management shall include other items in the checklist that are of relevance to the school in question.

As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess relevant school policies, procedures, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the school's Child Safeguarding Statement, the Children First Act 2015, the Addendum to Children First (2019) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023).*

	Yes/No
1. Has the Board formally adopted a Child Safeguarding Statement in accordance with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
2. Is the Board satisfied that the Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed in a prominent place near the main entrance to the school?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
3. As part of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
4. Does the school's Child Safeguarding Statement include a written assessment of risk as required under the Children First Act 2015? (This includes considering the specific issue of online safety as required by the Addendum to Children First)	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
5. Has the Board reviewed and updated where necessary the written assessment of risk as part of this overall review?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
6. Has the Risk Assessment taken account of the risk of harm relevant to online teaching and learning remotely?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
7. Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
8. Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
9. Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
10. Has the school appointed a DLP and a Deputy DLP?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
11. Are the relevant contact details (Tusla and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
12. Has the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school's Child Safeguarding Statement to new school personnel?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
13. 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 (revised 2023)* and the Children First Act 2015?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
14. Has the Board received a Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) at each Board meeting held since the last review was undertaken?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
15. Since the Board's last review, did each CPOR contain all of the information required under each of the 4 headings set out in sections 9.5 to 9.8 inclusive of the procedures?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
16. Since the Board's last review, has the Board been provided with and reviewed all records relevant to the CPOR?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

17. Is the Board satisfied that the records provided are anonymised and redacted as necessary to ensure that the identities of children and any other parties, including school personnel, to whom the concern or report relates are not disclosed?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
18. Since the Board's last review, have the minutes of each Board meeting appropriately recorded the records provided to the Board as part of CPOR?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
19. Have the minutes of each Board meeting appropriately recorded the CPOR?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
20. Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to Tusla/An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed in each case reviewed?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
21. Is the Board satisfied that, since the last review, all appropriate actions are being or have been taken in respect of any member of school personnel against whom an allegation of abuse or neglect has been made?*	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
22. Where applicable, were unique identifiers used to record child protection matters in the Board minutes?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
23. Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
24. Has the Board been notified by any parent in relation to that parent not receiving the standard notification required under section 5.6 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*?	☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A
25. In relation to any cases identified at question 20 above, has the Board ensured that any notifications required under section 5.6 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* were subsequently issued by the DLP?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
26. Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), has been provided with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
27. Has the Board ensured that the patron has been provided with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
28. Has the Board ensured that the school's Child Safeguarding Statement is available to parents on request?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
29. Has the Board ensured that the Stay Safe programme is implemented in full in the school? (applies to primary schools)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A
30. Has the Board ensured that the Wellbeing Programme for Junior Cycle students is implemented in full in the school? (applies to post-primary schools)	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
31. Has the Board ensured that the SPHE curriculum is implemented in full in the school?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
32. Is the Board satisfied that the statutory requirements for Garda Vetting have been met in respect of all school personnel (employees and volunteers)? *	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
33. 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?*	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
34. 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)?*	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
35. Has the Board considered and addressed any complaints or suggestions for improvements regarding the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
36. Has the Board sought the feedback of parents in relation to the school's compliance with the requirements of the child safeguarding requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

37. Has the Board sought the feedback of pupils in relation to the school's child safeguarding arrangements?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
38. Is the Board satisfied that the '*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* are being fully and adequately implemented by the school?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
39. Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
40. Has the Board put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
41. Has the Board ensured that any areas for improvement that were identified in any previous review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement have been adequately addressed?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Signed _____ Date 06th October 2025
Fionnghuala King
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date 06th October 2025
Robert O'Reilly
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Note: Where a school is undertaking its first review, references in this checklist to the "last review" shall be taken to refer to the date on which the Child Safeguarding Statement was first put in place.