

St. Patrick's SNS

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

1. School Profile

St. Patrick's Senior National School is a DEIS senior primary school providing primary education to pupils from Third Class to Sixth Class. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

2. Legislative Context

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been prepared in accordance with:

- Children First Act 2015
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
- Addendum to Children First (2019)
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023 and forthcoming 2025 Procedures, to be adopted by 31 December 2026)
- Tusla Guidance on the Preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016

The Board of Management (BoM) of St. Patrick's SNS has adopted and will fully implement, without modification, the Department of Education's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023) as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement, and will adopt the 2025 Procedures within the required timeframe.

3. Designated Liaison Personnel

Designated Liaison Person (DLP): Mary O'Riordan

Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP): Laura Mulligan

The DLP is the "relevant person" under the Children First Act 2015.

4. Principles of Child Protection and Welfare

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all school policies, practices, and activities.

Accordingly, St. Patrick's SNS will:

- Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations.
- Fully comply with statutory obligations under child protection legislation.
- Fully cooperate with statutory authorities (Tusla, An Garda Síochána, HSE, Department of Education).
- Adopt safe recruitment and employment practices to minimise risks.
- Operate safe supervision practices to reduce the possibility of harm.
- Promote a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability in all child safeguarding matters.
- Respect the confidentiality requirements of child protection procedures.
- Encourage parental involvement and maintain regular communication with parents/guardians.

In this Statement, “harm” is defined in line with the Children First Act 2015 as assault, ill-treatment, neglect, or sexual abuse, and includes harm caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or by a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

5. Procedures and Measures in Place

St. Patrick’s SNS has the following procedures in place:

1. Child Protection Procedures

- Full adherence to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 (including mandated reporting).
- Clear disciplinary procedures where staff members are subject to investigation.
- Where a teacher is dismissed, resigns under a disciplinary process, or a complaint has been made, the Board shall notify the Teaching Council in line with updated Department requirements.

2. Safe Recruitment & Vetting

- Compliance with National Vetting Bureau Acts 2012–2016 and relevant DE circulars.
- Garda Vetting required for all staff, volunteers, contractors, and external coaches.
- Reference checks and adherence to the school’s Code of Behaviour.

3. Staff Training & Awareness

- All staff receive a copy of this Child Safeguarding Statement.
- New staff receive the Statement upon induction.
- All staff complete Tusla’s online child protection training.
- Board of Management members undertake child protection training.
- Training records are maintained by the BoM.
- Mandated persons will receive ongoing support, guidance and advice in fulfilling their statutory obligations.

4. Reporting Procedures

- All staff are aware of their mandated reporting obligations under the Children First Act 2015.
- Concerns are reported strictly in line with legislation and procedures.

- The DLP is the relevant person under the Act.
- All registered teachers are mandated persons.
- Retrospective disclosures (adults disclosing past abuse) will be managed and reported in line with Children First and Tusla guidance.

5. Risk Assessment

- A Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment has been undertaken by the BoM.
- Procedures are in place to address identified risks.

6. Accessibility and Transparency

- This Statement is:
 - Published on the school website
 - Made available to all school personnel and the Patron
 - Available to Tusla and/or the Department on request

A child-friendly summary of this Child Safeguarding Statement will be displayed in a prominent place in the school.

Oversight reports and checklists will be anonymised in line with Department guidance before being shared or published.

7. Review and Monitoring

- The Statement will be reviewed at least every 24 months, and sooner if necessary following a material change in circumstances or legislation.
- The Board of Management will receive an annual anonymised report on the implementation of child safeguarding procedures.

8. Record-Keeping

-All records of child protection concerns, reports and related documentation will be maintained in a secure and confidential manner, in line with data protection law, and retained in accordance with Department guidance and Tusla requirements. Records will be accessible only to authorised persons.

6. Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

In accordance with Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and Chapter 8 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, the following written risk assessment identifies risks of harm and outlines procedures to manage them.

Activity	Risk of Harm Identified	Procedures in Place to Address Risk
Daily arrival/dismissal	Risk of harm due to lack of supervision	Supervision rota; yard/playground supervision policy

Recreation breaks	Risk of harm from bullying or lack of supervision	Anti-Bullying Policy; supervision plans
One-to-one teaching/support	Risk of harm in isolated settings	Glass-panelled doors; open-door policy
Online teaching/learning	Risk of harm from misuse of digital platforms	AUP; parental guidance; filtering software
School outings/trips	Risk of harm from external individuals or inadequate supervision	Off-site trips policy; risk assessment
Toilets/changing areas	Risk of inappropriate behaviour or lack of privacy	Toileting/changing protocols;
Sporting activities/external coaches	Risk of harm by external personnel	Garda vetting; teacher presence
SEN/intimate care	Risk of harm due to vulnerabilities	SEN Policy; Intimate Care Plans; staff training
Administration of medicine/first aid	Risk of harm due to lack of training or error	Administration of Medicine Policy; First Aid Policy
SPHE/RSE/Stay Safe	Risk of inadequate delivery of child protection content	Full implementation monitored by school leadership
Bullying	Risk of psychological/physical harm	Anti-Bullying Procedures; SPHE curriculum
ICT/social media	Risk of access to harmful content	AUP; supervision; parent information evenings
Recruitment of staff/volunteers	Risk of harm due to unsuitable persons	Vetting; references; Code of Conduct
Visitors/contractors	Risk of unsupervised access to pupils	Visitor sign-in; supervision
Use of media/photos/videos	Risk of unauthorised use of images	Digital Media Policy; parental consent forms
After-school/homework clubs	Risk of harm from inadequate supervision	Vetting; supervision protocols; attendance records
Religious instruction (external)	Risk of inappropriate content/personnel	Supervised participation; parental consent

Student placements/work experience

Risk of harm by/to students

Vetting; supervision protocols

General Risks of Harm:

- Harm not recognised or reported by staff
- Harm caused by staff, other pupils, or visitors
- Inappropriate communications or relationships
- Inappropriate use of digital platforms
- Failure to comply with procedures

General Controls in Place:

- Adherence to child protection legislation and procedures
- Comprehensive training for staff and BoM
- Implementation of SPHE, Stay Safe, and RSE curricula
- Acceptable Use Policy (ICT)
- Code of Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy
- Home-School Liaison structures
- Critical Incident Management Plan

7. Review and Implementation

This Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated as soon as possible after any material change in legislation, guidance, or school practice

8. Ratification

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's SNS on:

Reviewed on: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management: _____

Principal/Secretary to the Board: _____

Date: _____