



**St. Joseph's Secondary School  
Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment  
And  
Child Safeguarding Statement  
2024/25**

**Review Dates:** This policy will be reviewed annually.

## **Mission Statement:**

Our school recognises that each pupil who enrolls is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. It is our wish that pupils leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and lives which may contribute to the betterment of society. We recognise that a pupil's development is closely linked to a good self-image and so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in such a manner as to allow all to realise their full potential. We see ourselves as working in partnership to develop the gifts and to meet the needs of all. We regard our school as an educational establishment with a Christian ethos characterised by care and justice.

## **Context/Rationale:**

St. Joseph's Secondary School is a co-educational inclusive school.

St. Joseph's Secondary School, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established four classes to provide an education exclusively for students with complex and severe educational needs arising from their diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The classes are intended for pupils who have a diagnosis of autism meeting DSM IV/V or ICD diagnostic criteria. The class is for all pupils who meet these criteria irrespective of cognitive ability.

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 has the following obligations:

- ensure, as far as practicable that children are safe from harm while availing of the school's services (i.e. while attending the school or while participating in school activities) .
- carry out an assessment of any potential for harm to children while they are attending the school or while they are participating in school activities (this is known as a risk assessment).
- prepare and display a written Child Safeguarding Statement in accordance with the requirements of the Act. The board must undertake an annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and issue the notification confirming completion of that review to the patron and the Parents' Association.

- appoint a “relevant person” as the first point of contact in respect of the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement; The Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The responsibilities of the DLP include liaising with external agencies such as An Garda and Tusla –the Child and Family Agency and acting as the resource person to any member of school personnel who has a child protection concern.
- provide a copy of its Child Safeguarding Statement to members of school personnel and, where requested to parents, members of the public and to Tusla.

The Children First Act, 2015 put a statutory obligation on registered teachers as mandated persons to report child protection concerns at the DLP/Tusla.

### Scope of this policy:

The terms ‘student’, ‘pupil’ and ‘child’ are interchangeable for the purposes of this policy .

Section 11 (1) (a) of the Children First Act, 2015 defines risk as “any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service.” **It should be noted that Children First outlines that risk in this context is the risk of “harm” as defined in the Children First Act, 2015 and not general health and safety risk.**

Section 2 of the Act defines harm as follows:

*“harm” means, in relation to a child –*  
*(a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or*  
*(b) sexual abuse of the child,*

*whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances or otherwise;*  
*“ill-treatment” means, in relation to a child, to abandon or cruelly treat the child, or to cause or procure or allow the child to be abandoned or cruelly treated;*  
*“neglect” means, in relation to a child, to deprive the child of adequate food, warmth, clothing, hygiene, supervision, safety or medical care;”*  
*“welfare” includes, in relation to a child, the moral, intellectual, physical, emotional and social welfare of the child.”*

The procedures outlined in the Children First Act 2015 and the subsequent Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children have been tailored to produce Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2023 (Revised).

These updated procedures for schools continue the previous procedures’ requirement that school personnel, including registered teachers, bring any concern that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected to the attention of the designated liaison person (DLP) in the school.

- The Children First National Guidance 2017 requires that Tusla should always be informed where a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

The DLP is responsible for ensuring that the recording and reporting requirements of these procedures are followed correctly and promptly. The DLP shall record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to his or her attention, and the actions taken following receipt of a concern or allegation of child abuse.

At each board of management meeting, the principal's report to the board shall include a Child Protection Oversight Report which will provide details of allegations of abuse made against members of school personnel, other child protection concerns in respect of pupils in the school, child protection concerns arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils and summary data in respect of reporting.

## Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment Template

### Child Safeguarding Statement

St.Joseph's 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.Joseph's 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 Paul Savage (Principal)
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Patrick Traynor
- 4 The Relevant Person is Mr.Paul Savage.  
*(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 Schools (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 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, the gov.ie website or will be made available on request by the school.

**Note:** The above is not intended as an exhaustive list. Individual Boards of Management shall also include in this section such other procedures/measures that are of relevance to the school in question.

- 7 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 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.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on 20/02/23.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on 12/09/23 pursuant to a high level review and recent legislation.

Signed: Emma Coffey

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 2//02/24

Date : 20/02/24

Signed: Paul Savage

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

## Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

### Written Assessment of Risk of [name of school]

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 [name of school].

#### 1. List of school activities

- Daily arrival of pupils.
- Exiting of school building and grounds
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one teaching
- One-to-one counselling
- Outdoor teaching activities
- Sporting Activities
- School outings
- School trips involving overnight stay
- School trips involving foreign travel
- Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in schools
- Sports Days
- 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, including appropriate use of restraint where required
- 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
  - Pupils who are members of the Traveller community
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children
  - Pupils perceived to be LGBT
  - Pupils of minority religious faiths

- Children in care
- Children on CPNS (Child Protection Notification System).
- Recruitment of school personnel including -
  - Teachers/SNA/P.M.Es and those involved in work placements
  - 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
  - Bus escorts
- 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
- Canteen use.
- Nurture Room
- Homework club/Evening study.
- Use of school car park
- Use of toilets/bathrooms and changing areas

**2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities -**

- Risk of feeling excluded, marginalised or discriminated against.
- Risk of a child not developing emotionally, cognitively, spiritually or morally.
- Risk of physical or emotional abuse/neglect to a student not being recognised or reported properly 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 or another organisation or other person while child participating in out of school activities e.g. school trip, swimming lessons
- 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, 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 school policies relating to student wellbeing such as the 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 an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner
- Risk of harm caused by a member of school personnel or another student accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner.
- Risk of harm resulting from infectious diseases/viruses.
- Risk of harm due to substance abuse.

**3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment -**

**Leadership and Management / Teaching and Learning**

- The Board of Management oversees an annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment; fulfilling its statutory obligations under section 11 (8) of the Children First Act 2015. In carrying out this review feedback is sought from the Parents Association, the Student Council and staff whereupon an action plan for the implementation of suggested improvements is put in place.
- The Child Safeguarding Statement (including the names of the DLP and Deputy DLP) is displayed prominently in the school and featured on the school website. A copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement is provided to the Parents Association and the trustees.
- The Board also evaluates 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 this legislation and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
- The DLP and Deputy DLP demonstrate adherence to child protection procedures and implement them accordingly:
  - The DLP provides a Child Protection Oversight Report at each monthly meeting.
  - The DLP liaises with relevant agencies such as Tusla and the Gardai. -Both the DLP and Deputy Principal attend child protection training as the need arises.
- Management ensures that all staff recruitment procedures adhere to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation, relevant DoES circulars and Teaching Council registration.
- Management ensures compliance with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff including those of the Teaching Council.
- Management provides for a culture of on-going training and professional development with regard to child protection and safeguarding procedures. All school staff along with the Board of Management undertake an annual online Tusla course whilst new staff also receive guidance and instruction as part of their induction programme. A record of all CPD is retained by management.

- Management prioritises awareness of child protection procedures amongst all school personnel who are provided with copies of:
  1. St. Joseph's Child Safeguarding Statement.
  2. The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017/ Children First Act 2015.
- *Management promotes current best practise with regard to teaching and learning and is guided by 'Looking At Our School 2022' and in particular the process of school self-evaluation.*
- Management promotes professional values and practice as detailed in the Teaching Council's Professional Code of Conduct (2016). Adherence to procedures and best practice is expected from all
- Management ensures the provision of a comprehensive suite of school policies which are compliant with relevant legislation and DoES guidelines for the purpose of child safeguarding and protection. Policies are regularly reviewed / amended in response ongoing change; and are available on the school website or available from the school office.

**Current policies:**

- Health and Safety policy
- SPHE policy
- Pastoral Care policy
- RSE policy
- Wellbeing policy
- Assessment and Reporting policy
- Additional Educational Needs policy
- Code of Behaviour policy & Code of Positive Behaviour
- Attendance policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Student Supervision policy
- Trips and Tours policy
- External Sports Coaches policy
- Pupil Personal Accident policy
- Critical Incident policy
- Student Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Interim Acceptable User policy (Remote Learning)
- Staff Internet Use Policy
- CCTV policy
- Evening Study policy
- Data Protection policy
- Substance Misuse policy
- Mobile Phone policy
- Work Experience policy
- First Aid policy
- Administration of Medication policy
- Face Coverings in School policy
- Whole School Guidance policy
- External Curriculum Contributors policy
- Dignity At Work policy
- Flight Risk Policy
- Toilet & Intimate Needs policy

- The school has in place procedures for one-to-one teaching activities.
- The school has in place procedures in respect of student teacher placements; policy pending.
- Management co-ordinates internal systems and supports for wellbeing, safeguarding and child protection purposes including:
  - 1. The Student Support team consisting of Senior management, Year Heads, Programme Co-ordinator, Additional Education Needs Co-ordinator. The Student Support team meets on a weekly basis to address issues relating to vulnerable students in each Year group.
  - 2. The Year Head/Class tutor system
  - 3. The Guidance and counselling / Chaplaincy service.
- Management promotes and fosters linkages with external child care/support agencies including:
  - the National Education Psychology Service (N.E.P.s)
  - TUSLA including TESS (Tusla Educational Support Service) and TPPFS (Tusla Prevention, Partnership and Family Support).
  - the Health Service Executive including (CAMHS)
  - Substance Use for Teens (SUST)
  - National Council for Special Education ( NCSE)
  - An Garda Siochana
  - DoES
  - NCCA
  - Oide ( Schools teaching & Learning support service)
  - The school trustees (E.R.S.T).
- The school promotes Catholic education which is student centred; holistic and inclusive in nature. Teachers are encouraged to develop a positive learning environment which is sensitive and responsive to the needs of students and child protection. Students are offered the opportunity to participate in a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- The curriculum fulfils the mandatory requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017:
  - The school implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle including Social Personal Health Education (incorporating Relationship Sexuality Education) , Civic Social Political Education and Physical Education.
 Various programmes as offered by relevant agencies are also delivered including STAY SAFE (Child Abuse Prevention Programme) and the FRIENDS For LIFE programme.

**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.