

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

St Columba's NS is a primary school providing primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

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 Columba's NS 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 Emma Walkin
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Tara Young
- 4 The Relevant Person is Emma Walkin
(*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: **26/02/2024**.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on: **25/09/2024**.

Signed: EBG

Rev'd Garth Bunting,
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Emma Walkin

Emma Walkin
Acting Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 25/9/24

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of St Columba's NS, North Strand, Dublin 3, 14463t

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 (revised 2023)*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of St Columba's NS.

| 1. List of school activities | 2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities - | 3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment - |
|---|---|--|
| Arrival of pupils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unsupervised children on the school grounds may be vulnerable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are regularly reminded that school opens at 8.30am and that children are their responsibility until that time. • Teachers / SNAs shall be in position to receive children promptly at 8.30am or will have made appropriate arrangements for the supervision of their class. |
| Children travelling about the school campus on messages, changes of class or going to learning support. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As the school is in two blocks, children may be vulnerable to meeting unknown persons when moving from one block to the other. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children going from one block to the other should be sent in groups of at least 2 (Note: no child in the Junior infant to 2nd class will be sent between blocks without adult supervision) • Children going to and coming from learning support should be escorted by the SEN teacher or an SNA. |
| Visitors to the school for deliveries or other purposes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school is in a very public area, easily accessible to persons unknown/not employed by the school or persons visiting the school with deliveries etc. The school has no control over Garda Vetting of such personnel and cannot be sure that they would not be a danger to children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff must be prepared to challenge persons they see on campus. • All persons coming to the school must make themselves known on arrival to a member of staff. • The school shall retain a written register of visitors to the school |

| 1. List of school activities | 2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities - | 3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment - |
|--|---|---|
| External sports coaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harm to children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports coaches working with the school must provide Garda Vetting through their organisation • During sessions with an external coach, a staff member shall be present at all times. |
| One-to-one teaching / counselling. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harm to school children. - Accusations against school personnel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All one-to-one teaching sessions should take place in a room with a glass panel in the door or the door should be left open during sessions. |
| Volunteers / Parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harm to students: a relationship of trust developing between children and an adult which could be exploited inappropriately. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons who are not employed by the school but who may, through volunteering for school activities, develop a close relationship with children shall be Garda Vetted. |
| Inclusion of children who may be perceived as different (e.g. LGBT, disability, ethnicity etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bullying and exclusion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Bullying Policy • Code of Behaviour • Delivery of Walk Tall and Stay Safe. |
| Use of ICT by members of School community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children - Teachers - Parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bullying - Inappropriate contacts - Accessing inappropriate material - Inappropriate or unfair posting on social media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School internet using PDST filters to exclude social media such as Facebook, Twitter etc • Children not permitted to engage in on-line "Chat" using school equipment. • Children's phones turned off during school time and during school activities. • Children's phones turned off during school time and during school activities. • Teachers monitoring children using ICT equipment for learning and research in school. |

| 1. List of school activities | 2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities - | 3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment - |
|--|--|--|
| Use of ICT (continued)... | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers assessing material on internet etc. before using in class. • All members of the school community being respectful in posts relating to the school and its people on social media. • The school shall access appropriate digital safety programmes as appropriate, particularly for children in Senior classes (3rd to 6th). • Information meetings regarding online safety to be hosted periodically by PTA • Remote teaching and learning during emergency situations such as pandemic or adverse weather conditions shall take place under strict terms which shall be agreed by staff and circulated to parents when such a need arises. These rules shall be reviewed in the light of changes to platforms and equipment used and developed. Parents are expected to monitor their child's online activity when working from home and under the supervision of parents/guardians. |
| Use of toilets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bullying or inappropriate behaviour. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers monitor the use of the toilet by students, observing the frequency of toilet breaks and limiting the number of children in the toilet area at any one time. |
| Compliance with Children First Guidelines and Child Protection Legislation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harm / neglect not recognised or reported. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption by the Board of Management of Department of Education Child Protection Procedures for Primary Schools 2017 without modification. |

| 1. List of school activities | 2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities - | 3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment - |
|--|--|---|
| Compliance with Children First guidelines (continued)... | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safeguarding Statement and Department of Education and Skills Procedures available to all staff. • DLP and DDLP to attend PDST training. • All staff to undertake TUSLA training. Retraining to take place regularly (at least every two years). • Any changes to Child Protection Procedures to be circulated to all staff to make them aware. |
| Children going home at the end of the day. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-collection of children - Collection by someone not agreed by parents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are regularly advised of the importance of prompt collection of their children. • Parents are reminded to keep teacher informed of <u>any</u> changes to the “pick-up” arrangements for their child. • Teachers to ensure that “pick-up” arrangements are complied with. • Contact detail for parents available to teachers in case of a query. • All staff appropriately Garda Vetted. • All staff made aware of safeguarding policies. |
| Recruitment of new staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harm not being recognised or reported. | |
| Recreation / Playtime | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bullying or inappropriate activity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A roster for the supervision of pupils during recreation shall be created. This will comprise of a combination of teachers and SNAs with appropriate numbers of adults on duty exhibiting the duty of care of a “prudent parent” as per Rules for National Schools 1965. |

| 1. List of school activities | 2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities - | 3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment - |
|--|--|---|
| School Trips & use of off-site facilities (theatres, sports halls, pitches etc) | - Harm to children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers research school trips with regard to Child Protection • Appropriate staff levels when going on trips & tours (Teachers & SNAs) • Children should be in full sight of teacher or SNA • Children use toilet or changing facilities in pairs or under supervision as appropriate. |
| Sports Day | - Harm to children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisers must be on the look-out for non-school community members. • Clear rules to be applied regarding the use of toilet and changing facilities (groups accompanied by teacher or SNA) |
| Challenging behaviour by children (physical violence, self-harm or child leaving the school grounds) | - Harm or injury to children or staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A roster for the supervision of pupils during recreation shall be created. This will comprise of a combination of teachers and SNAs with appropriate numbers of adults on duty exhibiting the duty of care of a “prudent parent” as per Rules for National Schools 1965. • The school code of behaviour to be applied appropriately. • Appropriate additional training (such as restraint techniques) shall be accessed by the school as necessary • Support may be sought from School Special Education Services (SSES) |

| 1. List of school activities | 2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities - | 3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment - |
|--|---|--|
| Administration of Medicines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inappropriate use of medicines - Risk to wellbeing of other children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of medicines policy in place • Parents must send a request, in writing, to the board of management should it be necessary for a member of staff to administer medication to their child. • Appropriate training should be made available should the need for specialized medical intervention be required. • Appropriate storage of medications shall be made available in the school should the need arise. |
| Administration of First Aid | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harm to children - Unfounded allegations against staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular First Aid training for staff including appropriate child and vulnerable adult procedures. • Child Protection Protocols regarding adults with children or vulnerable adults to be followed (never alone with a child). |
| School Website and other school publications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inappropriate engagement between children in the school and others. - Harm to children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published photographs on the school website or other publications should not contain the names of children nor any reference which may identify a child to anyone outside the school community. • Parental permission sought for the use of photographs for in-school and website publications • Permission from parents to allow children to be photographed and / or named during external activities. |

| 1. List of school activities | 2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities - | 3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment - |
|---|--|--|
| Intimate Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harm to children - Accusations against staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will not assist children with changing except in extreme circumstances or under agreed protocols referring to a specific child with Special Needs • Staff members providing intimate care should never do so alone. |
| Policies and Procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harm not being recognised or reported - Risk of actual harm to a child - Risk of unfounded allegations against staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school shall have in place policies and procedures regarding possible risk of harm as defined in Chapter 4 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and the Children First Act 2015 • These policies shall be living documents and subject to review in line with legislation and the changing needs of the school. |
| Hiring of substitute / new teachers or SNAs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harm to children due to hiring of inappropriate / dangerous persons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff must have up-to-date Garda vetting : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher through the Teaching Council - SNA through the Board of Education or other patron body with whom the patron has an agreement - Teachers presenting for casual employment should present (1) statutory declaration document, and (2) form of undertaking affirming that there have been no child protection issues since their vetting. |

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.

This risk assessment was completed by the Board of Management on 26/02/2024. It shall be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Reviewed and updated on 26th February 2024 at a meeting of the Board of Management with a further review on September 25th 2024.

Signed: RB-LR

Rev'd Garth Bunting,
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Emma Walkin

Emma Walkin
Acting Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 25/9/24