



Child Safeguarding Statement for St. Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children

St Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children is a primary school providing primary education to students from Junior Infants to Sixth Class in Mainstream and Early Intervention (Year 1 and 2) to Sixth Class in the Facility for Deaf Children.

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 GNS with Facility for Deaf Children 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 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is: **Louise Roche**
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP) is: **Edel Ahern**

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 staff 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 student 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.
- 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.

- 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
 - facilitate staff to avail of relevant training
 - facilitate BoM members to avail of relevant training
 - Records are maintained by the BoM
- In relation to the reporting of child protection concerns to Túsla, 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 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 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 BoM 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.

This statement has been published on the school's website and has been provided to all 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.

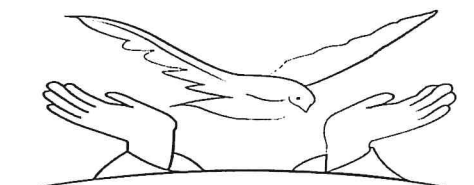
This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on Monday 26th March 2018

It was reviewed in June 2019. It was reviewed in April 2020.

It was reviewed again on 17th August 2020 ahead of the return to school after Covid-19.

It was updated on September 1st, 2021



ST. COLUMBA'S
GIRLS' NATIONAL SCHOOL
WITH FACILITY FOR DEAF CHILDREN

Signed: Don Murphy (Chairperson of BOM)

Signed Louise Roche (Principal)

Date: September 1st, 2022

Appendix: Written Assessment of Risk for St. Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children

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 GNS with Facility for Deaf Children

1. List of school activities:

- Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils
- Taxi escort facility for children in the Deaf Facility, journey to and from school
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- The school play area
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one teaching
- One-to-one therapy/support
- Outdoor teaching activities
- Sporting Activities
- School outings
- PA organised activities
- Use of toilet/changing facilities in schools
- Annual Sports Day
- Fundraising events involving pupils
- Use of off-site facilities for school activities
- School transport arrangements including use of taxi escorts
- Care of children with special educational needs, including intimate care where needed
- 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
 - 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
- Recruitment of school personnel including -
 - Teachers/SNAs
 - Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners/taxi escorts
 - 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
- 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 organisations during school day
- Operation of After-School/Homework club
- After school activities either on the school grounds and/or directly promoted or managed by the school outside of the school grounds
- Distance learning/teaching

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, 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 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 in an inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner.
- Risk of harm with regards Covid-19:
 - Risk of harm by failing to social distance from others
 - Risk of harm due to lack of hygiene and cleaning
 - Risk of harm due to failure to wear personal protective equipment.
 - Risk of harm due to lack of education for staff and pupils around Covid-19.
 - Child protection risk of one to one online video interaction with children during distance learning.

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* and will sign a statement to verify that they have read the document, are aware of its contents and will implement all policies and procedures therein.
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* are made available to all school personnel and they will sign a statement to verify that they are familiar with the contents of the document.
- 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 yard/playground supervision procedures to ensure appropriate supervision of children during assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms, etc.



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- The school has appropriate procedures in place in respect of school outings
 - The school has a Health and Safety Policy
 - The BOM has installed an Access Control System in the school
 - The school perimeter/boundary is securely enclosed by means of railings and palisade fencing
 - The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment of school personnel
 - The school has a code of conduct for teachers (ref Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct) and other school personnel (ref employment contracts)
 - The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
 - The school has a Special Educational Needs policy
 - The school is planning to develop an Intimate Care Policy/Plan in respect of students who require such care by the end of June 2018 The school has an ICP/P in respect of students (June 2019)
 - The school has a Nappy Changing Policy (re Early Intervention Pupils)
 - 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
 - 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
 - The school has in place an ICT policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils
 - The school has in place a Mobile Phone Policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by pupils
 - The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan
 - The school has procedures in place re the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum
 - The school has procedures in place re the use of external sports coaches
 - The school has procedures in place for one-to-one teaching activities
 - The school has procedures in place in respect of student teacher placements
 - The school has procedures in place in respect of students undertaking work experience in the school
 - The school has procedures in place in respect of visiting speakers to the school
 - The following procedures are in place to mitigate the spread of Covid-19
 - Social distancing is encouraged on the school premises and in the school building. Children are grouped in pods and bubbles and sit at the recommended distance from each other. Markings in the yard provide a visual for social distancing and a division for class bubbles.
 - Extra cleaning is carried out by the cleaners and caretakers. Extra care is given to touch points. Rooms are sanitised by fog machine regularly. Foot pedal sanitising stations are available in every room.
 - PPE available to all staff. Classes have hand washing routines. Teachers clean toys and resources regularly.
 - Child friendly signage is on display throughout the building. Teachers educate their class on hygiene and preventative measures regularly. Staff completed a Covid-19 Induction course before returning to work the 2020-2021 school year.
 - *All Covid-19 procedures are under continuous review in accordance to the latest guidance from the Government.
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- A parent must always be present to monitor their child's interaction with distance learning, in particular, when it is a one to one video call between the child and teacher.
- Visitors to school by appointment
- *See our Covid-19 Risk Assessment for further details.

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*

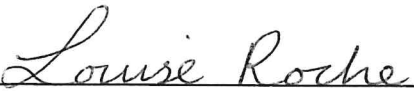
In undertaking this risk assessment, the Board of Management has endeavoured to identify as far as possible the risks of harm that are relevant to this school and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage all risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, the school has in place the procedures and policies 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 26th March 2018. It shall be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

It was reviewed in June 2019.

Signed  Date: 1st September, 2022

Dónal Murphy, Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed  Date:, 1st September, 2022

Louise Roche, Principal