



St Aloysius Secondary School

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CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

ST ALOYSIUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

1. NAME OF SERVICE BEING PROVIDED

St Aloysius Secondary School is state-funded by the Department of Education and Skills. The school was established under the patronage of CEIST in the Mercy tradition, who defines the ethos of the school. We provide secondary education for girls ages 12 to 17. We currently employ 26 teachers, 1 Special Needs Assistants, 1 caretaker and 2 secretaries.

2. CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

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 Aloysius 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 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Ms Alexandria Savage (Principal)
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (Deputy DLP) is Ms Kathy McGlade (Deputy Principal)
4. 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.

5. 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
 - ✓ 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 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 abovenamed 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 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 attached as an appendix to this statement.
- 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.

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.

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.

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.

3. NATURE OF SERVICE AND PRINCIPALS TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

The role of the school is to provide an appropriate education for our students. A stable, secure learning environment is essential in order to achieve this goal. Here in St Aloysius, we are committed to create a safe and positive learning environment that is respectful, inclusive and caring for all our students.

Activities and services provided:

- Daily activities to education the students in line with DES Guidelines and NCCA subject syllabi and specifications. Lessons are conducted through whole-class teaching, team teaching (i.e. 2 or more teachers co-teaching a class), small groups and withdrawal teaching (i.e. Small groups of students or individual students receiving additional instruction with a support teacher outside of the main classroom).
- Visiting teachers to the school, e.g. Coaches, writers, science speakers, university speakers
- School-based activities off-campus, e.g. Swimming lessons in the local pool, sport events, school tours.
- After school clubs run on the school premises with school staff, e.g. Sport, arts and crafts, religious instruction, and after school study.
- School events, e.g. Sports Day, Science Week, Maths Week, Seachtain na Gaeilge.
- Engagement with representatives of local initiatives including St Vincent de Paul and local primary schools

We believe that children have the right to learn in an environment in which they feel secure and protected from all forms of harm; such as neglect, assault, ill-treatment or sexual abuse. Our staff are vigilant for any signs of distress or harm among our students and apply our safeguarding procedures diligently to address and alleviate any such problems.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

Under the Children First Act, 2015 all boards of management are statutorily obliged to undertake a risk assessment in accordance with the Act. This assessment involves *considering and documenting the potential for harm to come to children (referred to as risk) while they are in the school's care.*

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.”

Undertaking the Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is an exercise whereby an organisation examines all aspects of its activities to establish whether there are any practices or features of those activities that have the potential to put children at risk of harm (as defined above). Children First National Guidance 2017 outlines that the risk assessment process is intended to enable an organisation to:

- Identify potential risks of harm
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk of harm by responding in a timely manner to potential risks
- Review whether adequate precautions have been taken to eliminate or reduce these risks of harm.

Under these procedures all boards of management are required to complete the risk assessment template published by the Department of Education and Skills when undertaking this risk assessment. The completed risk assessment template shall be included in the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement.

It is acknowledged that schools already have in place a range of policies, practices and procedures to mitigate the risk of harm to children while they are participating in the activities of the school and that some of these activities will carry low or minimal risks of harm compared to others. In the context of the risk assessment that must be undertaken by schools, the Children First Act, 2015 refers to risk as “any potential for harm”. Therefore, as part of its risk assessment process, the board of management lists and reviews all of its various activities (which shall include listing those that may carry low risk of harm as well as those that carry higher risks of harm). Doing so will help the board of management to (1) identify, as required under the Children First Act, 2015, any risks of harm that may exist in respect of the school’s activities, (2) identify and assess the adequacy of the various procedures already in place to manage those risks of harm and (3) identify and put in place any such additional procedures as are considered necessary to manage any risk identified.

In undertaking the risk assessment for St Aloysius School, 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 the risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risks 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 has been completed by the Board of Management on 24th August 2018. It shall be reviewed as part of the school’s annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement at the Septemebr meeting of the Board of Management.

5. PROCEDURES

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers / volunteers of a child availing of our service:

- Minor complaints about staff are managed in line with the complaints procedure, as outlined on our schools website.
- Allegations against staff of abuse or misconduct are managed according to the school Child Protection Policy or Complaints Procedure.

Procedure for the recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children:

- Only teachers who are Garda vetted are employed. All temporary and permanent teachers are registered with the Teaching Council.
- All SNAs are employed in the school in a temporary or permanent capacity are Garda vetted.
- Parents and volunteers who work with the students in a long-term or consistent basis are Garda vetted.
- References from previous employers are obtained before employment in the school.
- A Form of Undertaking and Statutory Declaration are completed before commencing employment in the school.

Procedure for the provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm:

- Staff are informed of school child-protection and anti-bullying procedures during staff induction at the beginning of each school year:
 - School policies are provided to all staff and discussed. Staff are informed of the relevant person to direct queries to for each policy.
 - All staff will be trained in the recognition of signs of abuse and reasonable grounds for concern and provided with a copy of the relevant sections of Children First during staff induction each September. All new members of staff hired after this induction day will receive training as soon as possible from an appropriate member of staff.
 - Staff are informed of reporting procedures and provided with a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- The school *Child Protection Policy* and *Anti-Bullying Procedures* are available to download on our school intranet and on our school website. Child Protection and Anti-Bullying documents, e.g. reference sheets, reporting templates, are available for staff on the school intranet also.
- Child Protection Guidelines, including names of the DLP and DDLP and reporting procedures, are displayed in the school entrance and on the school website

- The DLP/DDLP/Board of Management engage with Child Protection training through Tusla and PDST
- School management stay updated on current Child Protection guidelines and circulars. School management will update staff and BoM and provide any training required where appropriate.

Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla:

- All mandated persons shall report a mandated concern to Tusla as soon as practicable in accordance with the Children First Act.
- The DLP or DDLP shall act as a resource to the mandated person to ensure that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly.
- On completion, a report shall be forwarded to the relevant Duty Social Worker by the DLP, DDLP or Mandated Person.
- In the event the report is forwarded by the DLP or DDLP, the Mandated Person shall be informed in writing that the report has been forwarded.
- In the event that the report is forwarded by a mandated person without the assistance of the DLP/DDLP, the DLP or DDLP shall be informed and any copies provided to be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the DLP's office.

Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons:

- All teachers and Special Needs Assistants in the school are mandated persons. Mandated persons, as defined in the Children First Act 2015, have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports.

Procedure for appointing a relevant person:

- The school principal and DLP, is the relevant person in accordance with the Children First Act 2015.
- The deputy principal and DDLP, will deputise for the DLP in her absence.
- The name and contact details of the current DLP and DDLP will be displayed at the school entrance and on the school website.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This document will be published on our school website and will be circulated to all members of our school community including parents and staff. A hard copy of the policy can be available on request.

6. REVIEW

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

An addendum to this statement was made on 11th April 2019 to reflect the newly Appointed Principal Ms. Alex Savage who will assume the role of DLP as of May 13th 2019.

A full review of this statement will begin in August 2019 as per Child Protection Guidelines.