



Board of Management:

Child Protection Risk Assessment 2021

Context

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 11th November 2020. It shall be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed Date

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed Date

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management