

St Dymphna's School: Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Child Safeguarding Statement

St Dymphna's School is a Special School providing primary/post-primary education to pupils from four to eighteen years of age with a Mild General Learning Need.

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. Dymphna's 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 (revised 2023)* as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement

2. **The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Maureen Quinn (Principal)**

3. **The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Fionnuala Comer (Acting Deputy Principal/Class 1 Teacher)**

4. **The Relevant Person is Maureen Quinn**

(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.)

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.

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of St. Dymphna's 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 St. Dymphna's School

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.

1. List of School Activities

School transport arrangements including use of bus escorts.

Entry to school by visitors

Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils

Recreation breaks for pupils.

Classroom teaching

One-to-one teaching

Outdoor teaching activities

Sporting Activities

Sports Day

School outings

School trips

Fundraising events involving pupils.

Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in schools.

Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/ high needs

- Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants
- Members of the Traveller community
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children
- Pupils of minority religious faiths
- Children in care
- Children on CPN – Tusla's Child Protection Notification System.
- Children with medical needs

Care of vulnerable adult students including intimate care and escorting pupils to the toilets

School Masses and celebrations- including Christmas concert.

Use of video/photography/other media to record school events.

Substitute teachers

Use of external personnel to supplement curriculum.

Curricular provision in respect of SPHE. RSE. Stay Safe

Administration of Medicine

Administration of First Aid

Work Experience Placement.

Use of digital technology including computers, laptops, mobile phones.

Curricular provision in respect of SPHE (Social Personal Health Education), RSE, Stay Safe

Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils.

Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils.

School meals/snacks- provision of food.

Students participating in work experience in the school.

Students in the school participating in work experience elsewhere.

Student teachers undertaking work experience in the school.

Use of premises by other organisations during the school day.

Participation by pupils in religious ceremonies external to the school

Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour including suspension of pupils, etc.

Use of school premises by other organisations outside school day.

Recruitment of school personnel including -

- Teachers/SNA's
- Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners
- Sports coaches
- External Tutors/Guest Speakers
- Student teachers undertaking training placement in school.
- Volunteers/Parents in school activities
- Visitors/contractors present in school during school hours.
- Visitors/contractors present during after school activities.
- Training of school personnel in child protection matters.
- Use of external personnel for additional curriculum activities
- Visitors/parents involved in school activities or in school during the school day.
- Visitors/contractors present during school hours.
- Participation by pupils in religious ceremonies/instruction external to the school
- Use of digital technologies by pupils in the school
- Application of sanctions under the schools Code of behaviour including time out, movement breaks etc.
- Use of school premises by other organisations during the school day- health nurse, vaccination team etc
- Students being sent to other classrooms when a teacher is absent.
- Risk of pupils absconding when shortage of staff to supervise when staff absent.

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 and risk of child being harmed in the school by another child.

Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children in school

Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision due to staff absences.

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 digital devices, social media, phones, and other devices while at school.

Risk of harm due to publication and storage of photographs/video of a child.

Risk of harm to child while receiving intimate care.

Risk of harm due to lack of healthy or insufficient lunch.

Risk of harm due to breach in GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) regulations

Risk of harm to children who have particular vulnerabilities such as social, emotional, behavioural, and medical needs.
 Risk of harm to child while a child is receiving intimate care.
 Risk of harm due to accidents or injuries on site.
 Risk of harm due to inadequate code of behaviour or code of behaviour not being followed.
 Risk of harm due to racism
 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 to pupils accessing inappropriate material on You Tube on devices set to filtering Level 4.
 Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device, or other manner
 Risk of harm due to Information on pupils being transferred/shared inappropriately.

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* all staff were asked to review and contribute to the statement.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) were made available to all staff and time was set aside at staff meeting time for all staff to read. These are available on Aladdin and on the school website

- School Personnel are required to adhere to the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the *Children First Act 2015* and its Addendum (2019)
- BOM (Board of Management) records all staff and BOM training.

All staff have completed the TUSLA training module and e- learning training provided by PDST.

The HSE (Health Service Executive) asked the school to confirm that all mandated persons have completed the required training.

- The school implements in full the Stay Safe Programme
- The school implements in full the SPHE curriculum.
- The school implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle-Level 2 refer to SPHE policy.
- 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*

Code of Behaviour/Anti-bullying procedures classrooms to inform adults as to the steps to be followed. Consistent records are kept of incidents in line with our Code of Behaviour.

In line with updated procedures, class teachers will also be required to fill in incidents of bullying in the form available- Appendix 1 Anti-bullying policy.

Class teacher will deliver lessons on anti-bullying and record this in their long term and short term recorded preparation.

Pupils are encouraged to disclose any incidents of bullying behaviour.

Promotion of culture of openness and respect in which students can approach staff to discuss concerns and worries.

Anti-bullying policy sent to all parents and available from the school and on the website.

Adequate supervision to ensure codes are being followed and there is a supervision policy in place.

When a teacher is absent and sub cover is not provided or is unavailable the pupils in that class will be supervised in other classes- Refer to splitting of classes list.

Visitors to the school, and all staff, must sign in and out at the front entrance.

Visitors to the school are always accompanied by a staff member.

Entry to the school and shared area is by keypad and all visitors must report to the school office when given access by a staff member.

Entry/Exit doors are kept closed at all other times and staff are responsible for ensuring doors are closed after entry/exit by students.

Keypad code is changed at least once a year and more if required.

Staff will approach and take members of the public to the school office if found on school yard.

Regular visitors to the school e.g., external teachers, guest speakers, are Garda vetted or a copy of their Garda vetting is provided to the school.

Persons administering external programmes to the school e.g., Rugby, Sports groups etc through another body will provide the school with a copy of their Garda vetting and any appropriate insurance.

Children are closely supervised by staff members during school events in which visitors are invited into the school. e.g., Graduation, Christmas Mass, or other religious ceremony. School music and drama performances.

Changing rooms are supervised by staff when in use by pupils attending outside school sports events.

Parental consent is provided before pupils leave the school to attend any events.

Names and contact numbers of adults who have permission to collect each child are provided by parents and parents are asked to phone the school if their child is being collected by another adult.

If an unknown adult comes to collect a child and the school has not been informed beforehand by parents, the class teacher will call the parents to confirm the child has permission to go with that adult.

All school buses have an escort to ensure safety of all pupils to and from school each day.

If an adult appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they come to collect a child from school, they are not to be released by the class teacher. This would then be reported to DLP (Designated Liaison Person) or DDLP (Deputy Designated Liaison Person) immediately.

Use of electronic devices e.g. iPads, Chromebooks, laptops, phones, cameras are monitored and supervised by adults.

Any pupils using devices set to filtering Level 4 for educational purposes will be closely supervised.

Use of electronic devices in school is guided by the school AUP Policy.

School internet is provided by PDST in Education which is monitored for inappropriate content and unsuitable websites blocked.

Inappropriate content which appears through the school internet is logged and reported to our internet provider.

Pupils are provided with logins and passwords to use Google classroom.

Passwords for Class teacher e-mails are controlled by the school and e-mails can be accessed and monitored and are not used for anything outside school business. All e-mails are deleted, unless needed, at the end of the school year if not before.

Google classroom is monitored by the class teacher and pupils are removed from Google classroom when they leave the school.

Parents' consent is required for pupils to use Google classroom and associated tools.

Written parental permission to take photos of pupils is obtained by the school during enrolment.

Class teachers must check if children in their class have permission to be in school photos.

Personal devices are not used by staff to take school photos.

Photos taken by staff are removed from school devices after they have been printed.

Folders containing photos are stored securely in the school office.

Only children's first names are included with photos uploaded to the school website.

Pupils are not permitted to use camera phones during the school day or at school events.

Pupils who need assistance with toileting during the school day are assisted by two adults. (Refer to the school's intimate care policy.)

Glass panels are installed in the doors of all classrooms in the school.

A breakfast and lunch club is operated by the school. A hot lunch is provided each day.

Teachers and SNA's monitor children's lunches and ensure that all pupils are provided with a sufficient quantity of healthy food each day. The dietary requirements/particular needs of each child will be taken into consideration.

Confidential documents relating to pupils in the school are stored securely.

Hard copies are stored in locked filing cabinets in the secretary's office.

Documents are shared with staff on a need-to-know basis.

Class teachers keep any records of pupils work in a locked filing cabinet in a locked storeroom.

Child Protection files or documents are kept securely in the Principals office in a locked filing cabinet and access is restricted to DLP or in her absence the DDLP.

Parental permission for the transfer of information e.g., between the school and other professionals working with the child, is obtained before information is shared.

Concerns relating to social, emotional, behavioural, or medical needs are communicated by phone or through formal meetings.

Staff discuss concerns and learning targets with parents and a written IEP (Individual Education Plan) is signed by the parents. Learning targets are regularly monitored.

The care needs of pupils are discussed with parents and the level and type of support a student requires is agreed with the parents.

The school may recommend onward referral e.g., CAMHS, NCSE Behaviour support, for pupils presenting with significant difficulties.

A medical form has to be completed by parents on enrolment which specifies whether it is necessary for their child to receive medication. Parents are asked each year to update the school on their child's medical needs.

Pupils' attendance each day is recorded on Aladdin.

Parents must inform the school by phone, e-mail or in a note the reason for an absence. Contact will be made with parents in instances of regular unexplained absences.

Significant concerns are reported to the Education Welfare Officer.

Accidents and injuries that occur on the premises will be recorded on an incident form in accordance with the Accident and injury policy.

All teachers must be registered with the Teaching Council and have provided the appropriate Garda Vetting link etc.

All SNA's and additional staff are Gardai vetted.

All staff members will be informed of the school's expectation to follow the Code of Conduct for Teachers

All staff must have a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement to hand and know the identity of the DLP and Deputy DLP

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools revised 2023 are made available to all school personnel.

School Personnel are required to adhere to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools revised 2023 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- parents are informed when pupils are covering RSE within this programme and have the right to withdraw their child from lessons.

The school undertakes anti-racism awareness initiatives as part of SPHE.

The school is reviewing the area of Wellbeing as part of SSE in 2023-24

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*

All teachers will maintain reasonable and effective supervision of their class and follow the schools code of behaviour.

The school has a Supervision Policy to ensure appropriate supervision of children.

The school will carry out a risk assessment before school outings are organised and participation in these will depend on adequate supervision being available. No pupils are allowed on transport to/from events without a teacher. All buses for school trips require a teacher.

The school has a Health and Safety policy which was updated in 2020.

The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting.

The school complies with the codes of conduct for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff)

The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff.

The school has an intimate care policy/plan in respect of students who require such care and class teachers discuss this with parents.

The school has in place a policy and procedures for the administration of medication to pupils.

The school has an Arrival and Dismissal policy and procedure as part of our Supervision Policy.

The school

- Has provided each member of school staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
- Asks all substitute staff to sign that they have read the schools Safeguarding Statement when they arrive in school.
- 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
- Maintains records of all staff and board member 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 AUP (Acceptable Usage Policy) in respect of usage of digital technology which was reviewed in 2021.

The school has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by pupils in school.

The school has a policy on the taking and using of video/photographs which has been circulated to all parents.

The school has a policy on Critical Incident Management.

The school has in place a statement on Home/school communication.

The school has in place a policy governing the use of smart phone and tablet devices in the school by pupils as per circular 38/2018

No external personnel will be used to supplement the curriculum without the required vetting procedures being in place. Class teacher will always be present when external staff is in class.

The school will require all external sports coaches to have completed the required vetting and Class teacher will be present at all times.

Entry to school is controlled by keypad as is entrance to shared area. Doors are kept closed except for movement of pupils. Access has to be provided by staff member.

Pupils are supervised when transitioning from one area to another.

If a teacher is not in class when pupils arrive in the morning the Principal is advised, and pupils are divided and go to another class.

If a class teacher has to leave their class momentarily the teacher must advise the class teacher next door and pupils are supervised by this class teacher until the teacher returns.

If a teacher has to leave their class for any period of time pupils go to another class- see Splitting of classes list.

If technicians visit to repair equipment used by pupils e.g., wheelchairs etc a member of staff must be the technician at all times.

The school will be reviewing procedures for one-to-one teaching activities- but the following is currently in place- If one to one teaching is unavoidable-

- a. Glass in all classroom doors
- b. Classroom door will be left open, or teaching will be done in public area.
- c. Glass in sensory room door and names of pupils/staff in sensory room displayed on door.
- d. Pupils who are taken out for sensory breaks are in an open area used by other staff.

The school will review its procedures in respect of student teacher placements, but class teachers must always be present when student teachers are with pupils. Student teachers must provide a joint agreement from their educational institution accompanied by the required ID.

Where the school has agreed to vet a student and that student is between 16-18 years of age a Parental consent form will be required.

The school will put in place a policy/procedure in respect of pupils of the school undertaking work experience in external organisations before this is permitted.

Contractors whose presence is required during school hours, for the safety or welfare of pupils and staff will be accompanied by school personnel. All other work to be carried out outside school hours.

Pupils will be always supervised for school masses/celebrations.

Bus escorts who are employed by another school will be required to be vetted and have completed training with their employer when employed.

Any concerns in relation to pupils in St. Dymphna's School, travelling on school transport, are raised with the Principal in St. Dymphna's School who is the DLP.

Mandatory Template 4: Notification regarding the Board of Management's review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

To: St Dymphna School Community / Patrons

The Board of Management of St Dymphna's School wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement was completed at the Board meeting of 25/10/23
- This review was conducted in accordance with the "Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement" published on the Department's website www.education.ie

Signed  Date 25 October 2023

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed  Date 25/10/23

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management