

# Our Lady of Victories Infant School

Ballymun Road,

Dublin 9, DO9YC99.

E-mail: office@olvinfants.com

Telephone: (01) 837 2372

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## *Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment 2022/2023* *Written Assessment of Risk of Our Lady of Victories Infant School*

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 Our Lady of Victories Infant School.

### School Culture- Children's Voice

The stakeholders in Our Lady of Victories School have recognised the importance of the children's voice in amending the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment. Children's Wellbeing, in these Covid times, is prioritised. A "Wellbeing Committee" was established first in 2019. Children were invited to look through their lens at the concept of safety and belonging in the school. Their feedback was enlightening and has led to a new focus on Wellbeing. Pupils acknowledge that they feel "safe", with a sense of belonging – "we belong"; they feel "connected" and "protected". They brain-stormed, drew mind maps and extrapolated that "kind hands, kind feet, kind words and kind hearts" are key to harmony in our school and lives. They noted that they feel safe when the caretaker locks/unlocks the gate; first aid personnel are kind in First Aid; the secretary/principal rings a guardian when they are sick. They emphasised that we respect each other and they stated that they feel safe because they "know the rules". Their feedback, in the Infant School setting, is authentic and meaningful. Together with a little assistance, they composed a **Wellbeing School Anthem** containing the kernels of their wisdom, which the whole school will learn each year. Elements of their anthem will be explored in the SPHE programme. Interestingly, in our inclusive school, our children reflect that some children struggle more than others with managing an aspect/aspects of kind hands/feet/words/hearts and that these children need more support. This illustrates empathy in our young children.

Wellbeing is discretely timetabled. We piloted "Welcome to Wellbeing", Fiona Forman's programme and have adopted the same programme going forward with Junior Infants, Senior Infants and the First Classes. SCP interventions support the wellbeing of pupils and a limited number of children receive Play Therapy. Fiona de Brún, our NEPS psychologist is available to advise staff with regard to supporting children to thrive. Elements of the Incredible Years programme will be used where particular needs arise. We piloted an InHouse "Wellbeing through the lens of Literature"; a programme which will be continued. The Wellbeing Committee of 2022/2023 will meet regularly to discuss school related matters related to Wellbeing/ Events/School- Related matters under the guidance of the principal. A focus group of First Class children were consulted in September with regard to attitudes towards Literacy and Numeracy in the school and findings will impact on planning of teaching and learning.

### **1. List of school activities**

- Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils 08.50 and 1.45
- Recreation breaks for pupils have been changed 2022/2023 to support our Active Flag initiative- children will go outside for each break, weather permitting
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one teaching
- One-to-one assessments
- Outdoor teaching activities

- Sporting Activities
- School outings/ tours
- Use of toilet/changing/areas in schools
- Use of off-site facilities for school activities
- Care of children with special educational needs, including intimate care
- Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils
- 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 extracurricular 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 who have been identified by TUSLA as being at risk
  - Children who have experienced early childhood trauma
  - Homeless Children
- Recruitment of school personnel including -
  - Teachers/SNA's
  - Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners
  - Sports coaches
  - External Tutors/Guest Speakers
  - Volunteers/Parents in school activities
  - Visitors/contractors present in school campus during school hours
- Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school
- Students participating in work experience in the school
- Volunteers participating in curricular initiatives
- Student teachers undertaking training placement in school
- Use of video/photography/padlets & other media to record school events
- After school use of school premises by other organisations
- School Completion Programme
- Fire drill and evacuations
- Use of School premises by other organisations during the school day e.g. Puppet Show

**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
- Risk of harm due to bullying of child
- 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 in one-to-one teaching
- 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 children while external building works are being carried out

**3. The school has the following procedures and policies in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment -**

**NOTE: Under the Guidance of DES/HSE, going forward in 2022/2023, Covid-19 Policy/Response will be considered a “live” document. All relevant stakeholders will be informed if there are any current updates or recommendations from HSE/DES. The BOM will be very vigilant to the thorough implementation of Covid-related safeguards and procedures and indeed any other infectious disease that is highlighted by HSE/DES. Parents and stakeholders will receive communication via our agreed methods- text/email/SeeSaw leading to website updates as appropriate.**

- Covid-19 Policy Risk Assessment/Statement / Policy - note the Policy is a “**live document**” and will be updated when deemed necessary , in response to internal audits/reviews and government/DES/HSE advice and best practice
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Stay safe Policy
- RSE policy
- Phone and Digital Device Policy
- Positive Code of Conduct Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Agreed Grievance and Complaints procedure policy INTO/CPSMA.
- Data Protection Policy
- Whistle-blower Policy
- SEN Policy
- School Tours Policy
- Distance Learning Policy
- All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school’s *Child Safeguarding Statement*

- School volunteers/ SNAs on work experience read, agree to and sign ***Confidentiality Agreement (Policy formulated September 2022)***
- Parents are informed about Child-Protection and Safeguarding Procedures in operation and they are invited to liaise with the DLP /DDLDP if they need clarification.
- Parents are informed when the Child Safeguarding Policy is reviewed and it is posted on the school website
- The names of the DLP and DDLDP are clearly displayed in the school foyer
- If the names of the DLP /DDLDP are changed, the school community is informed
- All staff are invited to refresh their knowledge on an annual basis with regard to Child Safeguarding at the start of the year and a summary sheet is circulated outlining pertinent details to mandated persons.
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* are made available to all school personnel
- 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 / RSE
- 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 in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of school outings
- The school has a Health and Safety Statement/Policy
- The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting
- The school has Codes of Positive Behaviour
- The school complies with the agreed INTO disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
- The school has a Special Educational Needs policy
- The school has an Intimate Care Policy / plan in respect of students who require such care
- Our Wellbeing Anthem is explored and taught across the school; copies are sent home in Infant Packs at Induction day and all children receive a copy again in Term 1 to increase parental awareness/involve parent body in the promotion of a positive climate/culture
- 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 to avail of relevant training.
- The school has in place a policy and procedure for the Administration of First Aid.
- The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan

- The school has in place a Home School Liaison Policy and related procedures for Garda vetting
- The school has in place an ICT policy and a Distance Learning Policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils.
- Future-proofing the safety and wellbeing of children and stakeholders, the BOM, in collaboration with the BOM of the other schools on the campus, will represent to the best of their ability a suite of questions for TII in relation to the potential risks of the proposed Metro and make such presentations/queries should this forum of discussion reopen

**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 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 18th October 2022**

It shall be reviewed as part of the school’s annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed : Patrick Feeney  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: Mary McDonnell

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

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## Child Safeguarding Statement

### Our Lady of Victories Infant School Ballymun Road Dublin 9

Our Lady of Victories Infant School, Ballymun Road is a primary school providing primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to First 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 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 Our Lady of Victories Infant 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 **Mary McDonnell (Principal)**
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Deirdre Fallon (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.
- 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

- 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 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 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 these procedures.
- The various procedures referred to in this Statement will be made available on request by the school through DLP or Deputy DLP.

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

7 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 18th October 2022

Signed: Patrick Feeney \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: Mary McDonnell \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 18/10/2022

Date: 18/10/2022

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### Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* require the Board of Management must undertake a review of its Child Safeguarding Statement and that the following checklist shall be used for this purpose. The review must be completed every year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the Child Safeguarding Statement refers. Undertaking an annual review will also ensure that a school also meets its statutory obligation under section 11(8) of the Children First Act 2015, to review its Child Safeguarding Statement every two years.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list of the issues to be considered. Individual Boards of Management shall include other items in the checklist that are of relevance to the school in question.

As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess relevant school policies, procedures, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the school's Child Safeguarding Statement, the Children First Act 2015 and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.

	Yes/No
1. Has the Board formally adopted a Child Safeguarding Statement in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017'?	Yes
2. Is the Board satisfied that the Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed in a prominent place near the main entrance to the school?	Yes
3. As part of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017'?	Yes
4. Does the school's Child Safeguarding Statement include a written assessment of risk as required under the Children First Act 2015 ? (This includes considering the specific issue of online safety as required by the Addendum to Children First)	Yes
5. Has the Board reviewed and updated where necessary the written assessment of risk as part of this overall review?	Yes
6. Has the Risk Assessment taken account of the risk of harm relevant to online teaching and learning remotely?	Yes
7. Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	Yes
8. Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	Yes
9. Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	Yes
10. Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	Yes
11. Are the relevant contact details (Tusla and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	Yes
12. Has the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school's Child Safeguarding Statement to new school personnel?	Yes



13. Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017' and the Children First Act 2015?	Yes
14. Has the Board received a Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) at each Board meeting held since the last review was undertaken?	Yes
15. Since the Board's last review, did each CPOR contain all of the information required under each of the 4 headings set out in sections 9.5 to 9.8 inclusive of the procedures?	Yes
16. Since the Board's last review, has the Board been provided with and reviewed all documents relevant to the CPOR?	Yes
17. Since the Board's last review, have the minutes of each Board meeting appropriately recorded the records provided to the Board as part of CPOR report?	Yes
18. Have the minutes of each Board meeting appropriately recorded the CPOR report?	Yes although remote meetings do not feature CPOR
19. Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to Tusla/An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed in each case reviewed?	Yes
20. Is the Board satisfied that, since the last review, all appropriate actions are being or have been taken in respect of any member of school personnel against whom an allegation of abuse or neglect has been made?*	Yes
21. Where applicable, were unique identifiers used to record child protection matters in the Board minutes?	Yes
22. Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	Yes
23. Has the Board been notified by any parent in relation to that parent not receiving the standard notification required under section 5.6 of the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017'?	N/A
24. In relation to any cases identified at question 21 above, has the Board ensured that any notifications required under section 5.6 of the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017' were subsequently issued by the DLP?	Yes
25. Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association (if any), has been provided with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	Yes
26. Has the Board ensured that the patron has been provided with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	Yes
27. Has the Board ensured that the school's Child Safeguarding Statement is available to parents on request?	Yes
28. Has the Board ensured that the Stay Safe programme is implemented in full in the school? (applies to primary schools)	Yes
29. Has the Board ensured that the Wellbeing Programme for Junior Cycle students is implemented in full in the school? (applies to post- primary schools)	Yes
30. Has the Board ensured that the SPHE curriculum is implemented in full in the school?	Yes
31. Is the Board satisfied that the statutory requirements for Garda Vetting have been met in respect of all school personnel (employees and volunteers)? *	Yes
32. Is the Board satisfied that the Department's requirements in relation to the provision of a child protection related statutory declaration and associated form of undertaking have been met in respect of persons appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions?*	Yes
33. Is the Board satisfied that, from a child protection perspective, thorough recruitment and selection procedures are applied by the school in relation to all school personnel (employees and volunteers)?*	Yes
34. Has the Board considered and addressed any complaints or suggestions for improvements regarding the school's Child Safeguarding Statement?	Yes

35. Has the Board sought the feedback of parents in relation to the school's compliance with the requirements of the child safeguarding requirements of the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017'?	Yes
36. Has the Board sought the feedback of pupils in relation to the school's child safeguarding arrangements?	Yes- Wellbeing Committee
37. Is the Board satisfied that the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017' are being fully and adequately implemented by the school?	Yes
38. Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	Yes
39. Has the Board put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement ?	Yes
40. Has the Board ensured that any areas for improvement that were identified in any previous review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement have been adequately addressed?	Yes

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date 18/10/2022

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date 18/10/2022

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

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### Notification regarding the Board of Management's Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

To: The Patron Body and Educational Stakeholders ( Parents, Teachers, Guardians, School Personnel)

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Victories Infant School Ballymun Road Dublin 9 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 18th October 2022
- 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](http://www.education.ie)

Signed

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

## Child Safeguarding Statement -

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### Appendix A Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment (of any potential harm)

List of School Activities	Risk Level	The School has identified the following Risk of Harm	The School has the following Procedures in place to address risk identified in this assessment
Training of school personnel in Child Protection matters	Medium	Harm not recognised or reported promptly	Child Safeguarding Statement & DES procedures made available to all staff  DLP& DDLP to attend PDST face to face training All Staff to view Tusla training module & any other online training offered by PDST  BOM records all records of staff and board training
One to one teaching	Medium	Harm by school personnel	Glass in window Teachers adhere to Code of Conduct as per Teaching Council
Care of children with special needs, including intimate care needs	High	Harm by school personnel	Policy on intimate care
Toilet areas	Medium	Inappropriate behaviour	Agreed procedures in place and constantly monitored
Curricular Provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay safe.	Medium	Non-teaching of same	School implements SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe in full
Managing of challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use of restraint	Medium	Injury to pupils and staff	Code Of Behaviour
Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils	Medium	Harm from other pupils, unknown adults on the playground Traffic on avenue	Arrival and Dismissal Policy & Procedures Caretaker locks/unlocks gate Health & Safety Policy
<b>List of School Activities</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>The School has identified the following Risk of Harm</b>	<b>The School has the following Procedures in place to address risk identified in this assessment</b>

## Child Safeguarding Statement -

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Recreation breaks for pupils	Medium	Injury to pupils/Bullying Harm not recognised or properly or promptly reported	Code Of Behaviour Procedure and OLV Anthem – kind hands, feet, words, hearts
Classroom teaching	Low		Teachers adhere to professional Code of Conduct as members of the Teaching Council Strong spirit of collaboration and culture of CPD
School Completion	Medium	Harm to pupils	Personnel aware of DLP role and reporting Personnel Garda vetted Regular Care Team meetings
Sports Coaches	Medium	Harm to pupils	Garda Vetted and always working in conjunction with Class Teacher

<b>List of School Activities</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>The School has identified the following Risk of Harm</b>	<b>The School has the following Procedures in place to address risk identified in this assessment</b>
Educational Trips	Medium	Unforeseen incident	School has formulated a policy
Volunteers/Parents	Medium	Harm to pupils	Vetting Procedures HSCCL /Class teachers present when parents working alongside pupils School Trip Policy Lanyards worn by approved visitors

## Child Safeguarding Statement -

<b>List of School Activities</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>The School has identified the following Risk of Harm</b>	<b>The School has the following Procedures in place to address risk identified in this assessment</b>
Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use of restraint where required	Medium	Injury	Code of Behaviour NEPS access SESS access
Administration of First Aid	Medium	Injuries not being identified/recorded/treated properly	School personnel trained- 2 members trained for First aid administration. Records are accurate. Specific CPD provided where required e.g. Diabetes
Administration of Medicine	Medium	Incorrect medication/dosage	Administration of Medicine policy approved by BOM Chairperson
Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe	Low	Mandatory teaching not being done	Programmes are mandatory- records in Monthly Planning Records. DLP/DDLP check records.
Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils	Medium	Bullying incidents	Code of Conduct & Anti-Bullying Policy Stay Safe & SPHE Wellbeing Anthem
Training of school personnel in child protection matters	Low	Knowledge of types of abuse and procedures	Whole staff training and Certification
Use of external personnel to supplement curriculum	Medium	Risk of abuse	Garda vetting. No non-teaching staff will be left with a child. Garda vetting. Approved visitor lanyard.

## Child Safeguarding Statement -

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<b>List of School Activities</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>The School has identified the following Risk of Harm</b>	<b>The School has the following Procedures in place to address risk identified in this assessment</b>
<p>Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/needs such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants</li> <li>● Members of the Traveller community</li> <li>● Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children</li> <li>● Pupils perceived to be LGBT</li> <li>● Pupils of minority religious faiths</li> <li>● Children in care</li> <li>● Children on CPNS</li> </ul>	Low	<p>Vulnerable due to communication or racial abuse.</p> <p>Vulnerable due to personal life experience/cultural context</p>	<p>EAL, SPHE, HSCL, Anti-bullying policy</p> <p>Code of Conduct Policy</p> <p>Wellbeing Anthem a protective factor</p>
<p>Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school</p>	Low	<p>Bullying</p> <p>Staff not following policies &amp; procedures</p>	<p>ICT/AUP policy</p> <p>Anti-Bullying Policy</p> <p>Code of Behaviour</p>
<p>Trainee teachers and SNA trainees</p>	Medium	<p>Risk to pupils</p>	<p>Induction and mentoring,</p> <p>Garda vetting</p> <p>Child-safeguarding Policy shared</p> <p>Confidentiality Policy/Agreement (2022)</p>

## Child Safeguarding Statement -

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**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 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 ..... It will be reviewed as part of the school’s annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 18th October 2022  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 18th October 2022  
Principal/Secretary Board of Management



# Child Safeguarding Statement -

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## **Appendix B Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse**

### **Purpose**

This chapter applies to all school personnel who come in contact with children. Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be experiencing abuse or neglect. This chapter contains guidance (based on chapter 2 of Children First National Guidance 2017) on the four main types of abuse and how abuse and neglect can be recognised.

### **Reasonable grounds for concern**

The Children First National Guidance 2017 requires that Tusla should always be informed where a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. If the symptoms of abuse are ignored, it could result in ongoing harm to the child. It is not necessary for a person to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern to Tusla. All that is required is that the person has reasonable grounds for concern. It is Tusla's role to assess concerns that are reported to it. Where a concern is reported, the information will be carefully considered with any other information available and a child protection assessment will be carried out where sufficient risk is identified.

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence (e.g. injury or behaviour) that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused.

### **Types of Child Abuse and how they might be recognised**

In Children First National Guidance 2017 and in these procedures, "a child" means a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married.

All school personnel should be familiar with signs and behaviours that may be indicative of child abuse. 11

This chapter describes the four main types of abuse: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse and outlines how abuse and neglect can be recognised. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in a community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger, and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, it should be considered a child welfare and protection issue for both children and child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the alleged victim and the alleged abuser.

Children First National Guidance 2017 states that the important factor in determining whether the behaviour is abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the parent/carer/other person.

The definitions of neglect and abuse presented in this chapter are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

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The procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect can be found in chapter 5 of these procedures. **If it is considered that a child is in immediate danger and Tusla cannot be contacted, An Garda Síochána should be contacted without delay.**

### **Neglect**

Children First National Guidance 2017 outlines that child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and wellbeing of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having difficulties of attachment. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life, as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty, but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where the child is seen over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet the children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

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A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme over-protectiveness • Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his or her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act, 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions

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relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings.

Since 1982 corporal punishment has been banned in schools.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in many instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult and/or by physical symptoms.

It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
  - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [ for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
  - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
  - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse. Details on the exemptions for mandated reporting of certain underage sexual activity can be found in section 4.7.1 of these procedures.

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Where a school becomes aware of underage sexual intercourse the school should take appropriate steps to inform the child's parents.

### **Circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to abuse and neglect**

School personnel dealing with children need to be alert to the possibility that a welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to children with whom they come in contact. A child needs to have someone they can trust in order to feel able to disclose abuse they may be experiencing. They need to know that they will be believed and that they will get the help they need. Without these things, they may be vulnerable to continuing abuse.

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to abuse.

The following list is intended to assist in identifying the range of issues in a child's life that may place them at greater risk of abuse or neglect. It is important to remember that the presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean that a child in those circumstances or settings is being abused.

- Parent or Carer Factors:
  - Drug and alcohol misuse
  - Addiction, including gambling
  - Mental health issues
  - Parental disability issues, including learning or intellectual disability
  - Conflictual relationships
  - Domestic violence
  - Adolescent parents
  
- Child Factors:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Sexuality
  - Disability
  - Mental health issues including self-harm and suicide
  - Communication difficulties
  - Trafficked/Exploited
  - Previous Abuse
  - Young carer
  
- Community Factors:
  - Cultural, ethnic, religious or faith based norms in the family or community which may not meet the standards of child welfare or protection required in this jurisdiction
  - Culture-specific practices, including:
    - Female genital mutilation
    - Forced marriage
    - Honour-based violence
    - Radicalisation
  
- Environmental factors:
  - Housing issues

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- Children who are out of home and not living with their parents, whether temporarily or permanently
- Poverty/Begging
- Bullying
- Internet and social media-related concerns
  
- Poor motivation and poor willingness of parents/guardians to engage:
  - Non-attendance at appointments
  - Lack of insight or understanding of how the child is being affected
  - Lack of understanding about what needs to happen to bring about change
  - Avoidance of contact and reluctance to work with services
  - Inability or unwillingness to comply with agreed plans

These factors should be considered as part of being alert to the possibility that a child may be at risk of suffering abuse and in bringing reasonable concerns to the attention of Tusla.

**If it is considered that a child is in immediate danger and Tusla cannot be contacted, An Garda Síochána should be contacted without delay.**

### **Bullying**

It is recognised that bullying affects the lives of an increasing number of children and can be the cause of genuine concerns about a child's welfare.

Children First National Guidance 2017 outlines that bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it be verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. Children First National Guidance 2017 describes bullying as behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating, and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyber bullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of identity abuse based on gender, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.

While bullying can happen to any child, some may be more vulnerable. These include children with disabilities or special educational needs; those from ethnic minority and migrant groups; those from the Traveller community; lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children and those perceived to be LGBT; and children of minority religious faiths.

There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying amongst children with special educational needs. This is particularly so among those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some children with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such children may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour. Research suggests that children with disabilities and with special educational needs are more likely to be bullied than others. Homophobic and transphobic bullying (bullying targeted at those who are or who are perceived to be LGBT) has also been found to be prevalent with evidence that such pupils have particular difficulty in speaking up or reporting the bullying behaviour.

Children First National Guidance 2017 states that bullying in schools can be a particular problem due to the fact that children spend a significant portion of their time there and are in large social groups. In the first

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instance school authorities are responsible for dealing with school based bullying behaviour. School authorities are required to have a code of behaviour and an anti-bullying policy in place in accordance with the Department's "Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools" (the Anti-Bullying Procedures) and Circular 0045/2013.

The Anti-Bullying Procedures define bullying as "unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time". In the context of the AntiBullying Procedures "placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people" is also regarded as bullying behaviour.

School personnel should be aware of their school's anti-bullying policy and the procedures to be followed in relation to any alleged bullying incidents.

Children First National Guidance 2017 and the Anti-Bullying Procedures provide that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Where school personnel have concerns about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, the designated liaison person shall seek advice from Tusla in accordance with the procedures set out in chapter 5 of these procedures.

### **Concerns in relation to an adult who may pose a risk to children**

Children First National Guidance 2017 states that while in most cases concerns for the welfare or safety of a child develop from one's own observation or knowledge of a particular child or his or her family, sometimes concerns arise in relation to whether an adult may pose a risk to children, even if there is no specific child named in relation to the concern. For example, on the basis of known or suspected past behaviour, a concern could exist about the risk an individual may pose to children with whom he or she may have contact. Any such reasonable concerns should be reported to Tusla, who will try to establish whether or not any child is currently at risk from the individual in question. Where school personnel have concerns as to whether an adult may pose a risk to children, even if there is no specific child named in relation to the concern but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, the designated liaison person shall seek advice from Tusla in accordance with the procedures set out in chapter 5.

Children First National Guidance 2017 states that while Tusla will make every effort to examine such cases, it is a very complex area involving the accused's constitutional rights to their good name, privacy and the right to earn a living, as well as the requirements of natural justice. Tusla must work within the Constitution, the law, the legal system and the demands of natural justice to balance the conflicting rights of those involved. This may limit how much feedback Tusla can provide to the person who reported the concern on the progress or outcome of the case. Tusla's examination can be greatly improved if the alleged victim feels able to co-operate with Tusla in its assessment or investigation.

#### **Appendix B is taken from :**

*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.*

Available online at -

[https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Child-Protection/child\\_protection\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Child-Protection/child_protection_guidelines.pdf)

## Child Safeguarding Statement -

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**Our Lady of Victories Infant School Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment  
were reviewed on 25/10/2022**

Patrick Feeney, Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

Mary McDonnell DLP \_\_\_\_\_

Deirdre Fallon DDLP \_\_\_\_\_

Ratified by the Board of Management on 25/10/2022

Original Signed Copies are in DLP Office