

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment 2025

Child Safeguarding Statement

St Fergal's College is a primary/special/post-primary school providing primary/post-primary education to pupils from First Year to Leaving Certificate Year.

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 Fergal's College 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 Carole Devine (Principal)
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is PJ Delaney (Deputy Principal)
- 4 The Relevant Person is Carole Devine
(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. In a school setting the relevant person shall be the designated liaison person.)
- 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, 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 re 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 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.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on 01/10/2025

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on 01/10/2025

Signed: John King
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 01/10/2025

Signed: Carole Jones
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 01/10/2025

Written Assessment of Risk of St Fergal's College

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 Fergal's College.

- **List of school activities**

- Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one teaching
- One-to-one learning support
- One-to-one counselling
- Outdoor teaching activities
- Online teaching and learning remotely
- Sporting Activities
- School outings
- School trips involving overnight stay
- School trips involving foreign
- Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in schools
- Annual Sports Day
- Fundraising events involving pupils
- Use of off-site facilities for school activities
- School transport arrangements including use of bus escorts
- Care of children with special educational needs.
- Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils.
- Management of provision of food and drink
- 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 support sports and other extracurricular activities
- Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/ needs (See Inclusion policy)
- Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants
- Members of the Traveller community
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children
- Pupils perceived to be LGBT
- Pupils of minority religious faiths
- Children in care
- Children on CPNS
- Children with medical needs
- 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 during school hours
- Visitors/contractors present during after school activities

- Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school, including social media
- Application of sanctions under the school's Code of
- Behaviour including detention of pupils, confiscation of phones etc.
- Students participating in work experience in the school
- Students from the school participating in work experience elsewhere
- Student teachers undertaking training placement in school
- Use of video/photography/other media to record school
- After school use of school premises by other organisations
- Homework club/ evening study

• **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 inadequate supervision of children in school.
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children while attending out of school activities.
- Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communications between child and another child or adult
- Risk of harm due to children inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones and other devices while at school.
- Risk of harm to children with SEN who have particular vulnerabilities
- Risk of harm due to inadequate code of behaviour
- Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching, counselling, coaching situations
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel communicating with pupils in an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner
- 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 caused by another student communicating with students in an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner.
- Risk of access by adults to children bypassing normal safer recruitment policies and procedures
- Risk of child sexual abuse through the virtual learning environment.
- Unauthorised school walking track by non-school personnel during school time.
- Risk of online peer on peer abuse through the absence of normal face- to- face contact and heightened use of social media.
- Risk of child sexual abuse through the virtual learning environment.
- Risks related to youth produced sexual imagery
- Risk of pupils feeling excluded from majority cultures and beliefs
- Risk of harm due to racism and other forms of prejudice
- Risk of harm due to bullying of a child
- Some students may not experience the RSE programme
- Risk of abuse or stigmatisation on the basis of infection, race or nationality

- Risk of neglect of children where parents are too ill, anxious or too burdened with work to be able to care for them
- Risk of staff members not having access to DLP/DDLP or communicating concerns.
- Risk of children not having access to usual pastoral care within the school.
- Risk of increased barriers to children reporting concerns to responsible adults
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• **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 have been provided with training.
- Members of the Board of Management have also been provided with training.
- The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 are made available to all school personnel who have been provided with training.
- 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 and its addendum (2019).
- The school implements in full the SPHE & RSE curriculum, has an Anti-bullying policy which
 - complies with DE requirements, and student welfare Assistant Principal. The school implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle
- The school has a yard/playground supervision procedure to ensure appropriate supervision of children during, assembly and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc.
- The school has in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of school outings. The school
 - has a Health and Safety policy.
- The school has a codes of conduct for school personnel (teaching staff). The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff. The school has a Whole School Inclusion policy.
- The school has in place procedures for the administration of medication to pupils. The school has:
 - Provided each member of school staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement.
 - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement.
 - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training. Encourages board of management members to avail of relevant training.
 - Maintains records of all staff and board member training.
- The school has procedures for the administration of First Aid.
- Members of staff have completed training in dealing with epilepsy.
- The school has comprehensive supervision procedures and avails of the additional supervision provision arising from Covid-19.
- School has clear procedures with respect to school outings.
- The school has in place a code of behaviour for pupils and staff which is being reviewed with a View to continuous review and evaluation. The school adheres to the requirements of Garda vetting legislation and has a policy in respect of external persons visiting the school and/or being involved in activities with students.
- The school has a Critical Incident Management Plan.
- The school has an SEN Plan.

- The school has in place a WI-Fi and Acceptable Use policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils.
- The school has in place policies in respect of usage of mobile phones, laptops, tablet and other electronic devices by pupils, as per circular 38/2018.
- The school has procedures for the use of external persons supplement delivery of the curriculum.
- The school has procedures for the use of external sports coaches
- The school has in place a policy and clear procedures for one- to-one teaching and counselling activities, and in respect of student teacher placements, including support for mentoring of trainee teachers and NQTs
- The school has in place policies and procedures in respect of student teacher placements
- The school has in place policies and procedures in respect of students undertaking work experience in the school
- The school has in place policies and procedures in respect of pupils of the school undertaking work experience in external organisations. Important Note: It should be noted that risk in the 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 4.
- School has Wi-Fi and Acceptable Use Policy, Mobile Phone Policy and Remote Teaching and Learning Policy.
- Remind all parents/students that the school will not engage any adult to act on its behalf during phases of online learning/lockdown except those already in school or otherwise provided with permission by the school, subject to Garda vetting, and notified to parents/guardians.
- Communicate with parents/students at the beginning of any lockdown phase/enforced online learning phase, reinforce online safety messages In school through well programme-programme. Provide links to online resources through website@/VLE if the school does not resume as normal. Teachers to reinforce online links on website Reinforce anti- bullying message through Wellbeing programme. This also includes cyberbullying, Teachers to reinforce anti-bullying message.
- Reinforce online safety messages in school through wellbeing programme. Provide links to online resources through website/VLE If the school does not resume as normal. Teachers to reinforce online safety messages. Put resource links on the school website.
- Awareness and education programmes through Wellbeing classes and SPHE. LGBT inclusion and addressing racism now included as examples of student welfare in the list of priority needs of the school i.e. Appendix 10. The school has a comprehensive yard/playground supervision procedures.
- Reinforce anti-bullying message through wellbeing programme. This also includes cyberbullying and homophobic. Teachers to reinforce anti-bullying message. Year Heads for all years. The school has an Anti-bullying Policy which fully adheres to the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary schools. Awareness is raised through Wellbeing classes including reference to a smooth transition from year to year.
- Audit of provision for all students before Christmas with a plan if required to complete coverage by the end of the school year.
- Additional signage and other awareness raising measures.
- Class teachers must remain with classes until the next timetabled teacher arrives. Parents/ guardians who need to collect students during school time must call to the office.
- Inclusive education e.g. learning about world religions and different cultures, with designated awareness raising events.

- Reinforce online safety messages in school through wellbeing programme. Provide link to online resources through website/VLE, if school does not resume as normal. Teachers to reinforce online
- safety messages. Put resource links on website.
- Remind students in face-to-face
- setting of supports that are available. Remind them also how these supports can be accessed in lockdown. Teachers of wellbeing to highlight to students to seek help in lockdown situations if they need it.
- Remind staff of the importance of contacting DLP/DDLP if they have a concern at any time. Regular reminders and information at staff meetings.
- Remind students of the supports which are available and how they can be accessed during lockdown.
- Remind students in face-to-face setting of supports that are available, Remind them also how these support can be accessed in lockdown. Specifically reference ways of coping with distress and anxiety, Teachers of wellbeing to highlight to students to seek help in lockdown situations, if they need it.
- Remind students in face-to-face setting of supports that are available. Remind them also
- how these supports can be accessed in lockdown. Specifically reference ways of
- coping with distress and anxiety and the importance of physical activity. Teachers of wellbeing, including PE, to highlight to students to seek help in lockdown situations, if they need it.
- Teachers reinforce anti-bullying message.

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.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 03/12/2025