



Mercy Secondary School

INCHICORE, DUBLIN 8

Child Safeguarding Statement

Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore is a Secondary School providing education to students from First Year to Sixth 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 Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

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

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Michelle O'Kelly

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) is James Hanrahan

The Relevant Person is Michelle O'Kelly

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 these principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

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 DES 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 Túsla, 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 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** in this 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.

This statement has been published on the school's website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parents' Association and the Trustees. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla and the Department if requested.

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

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on **February 8th 2024**.

Signed: 
Chairperson of Board of Management
Date:

Signed: 
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management
Date:



The Risk Assessment below was carried out by the Board of Management of **Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore** in order to establish if there are any practices or features of school activities that have the potential to place a student at risk. It was carried out in accordance with Túsla Guidelines and in adherence to the Children First National Guidance 2017. Throughout the Risk Assessment “harm” is defined as in Section 2 of the Children First Act, 2015,

- *assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or*
- *sexual abuse of the child.*

In conjunction with this Risk Assessment, the school has made the **Child Safeguarding Statement** available to each member of staff (including all new staff). BOM members and staff are encouraged to avail of all relevant training and records are kept of this training.

Risk Assessment

General Daily Activities	Potential Risks Associated	Mitigation of Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breakfast club ● Early Arrival ● General Arrival ● Departure ● Mid-morning Break ● Lunchtime Break ● Use of Toilet facilities ● Hired School Transport when used for school activity ● Public Transport when used for school activity ● Use of Technology in areas other than the classroom ● Congregation in locker areas ● Supervised after school study ● An 'empty' school at the beginning or end of the school day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Risk of harm not being recognised by school personnel ➤ Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by school personnel ➤ Risk of student being harmed by a member of school personnel ➤ Risk of student being harmed in the school by another child ➤ Risk of harm due to bullying of student ➤ Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of student in school ➤ Risk of harm where student finds herself last/first in the school building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The school has a corridor/grounds supervision protocol to ensure appropriate supervision of students during arrival, dismissal and break times and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc. ✓ The school has a Health and Safety policy ✓ The school has in place a Code of Behaviour for students ✓ All staff are Garda Vetted ✓ All staff have been provided with the Child Safeguarding Statement and have had appropriate training. ✓ The school has an Anti-bullying policy and procedures in place, which have been explained to the whole school community.
Teaching and Learning Activities	Potential Risks Associated	Mitigation of Risks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom interactions ● One-to-one teaching ● Guidance/counselling one-to-one sessions ● Curricular Content and/or presentation in SPHE/RSE/Wellbeing ● Use of substitute teachers in the case of absenteeism ● Facilitation of all Faiths in Curricular RE ● Meetings with Senior Leadership Team members on one-to-one basis ● Meeting with In House Leadership Team weekly ● Use of Education Technology within the classroom ● Work Experience ● Students with Special Needs ● Student teachers undertaking training placement in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Risk of student being harmed in the classroom by another student ➤ Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of students in classroom ➤ Risk of harm not being recognised by school personnel ➤ Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by school personnel ➤ Risk of harm due to bullying of student in classroom ➤ Risk of student being harmed in the classroom by teacher or substitute teacher ➤ Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching ➤ Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel communicating with pupils in an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other ➤ Risk of harm while carrying out work experience ➤ Risk of harm caused by personnel not differentiating for the needs of students with Special Needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The school implements in full the SPHE curriculum ✓ The school implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle ✓ All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school's <i>Child Safeguarding Statement</i> ✓ The <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017</i> are made available to all school personnel ✓ School Personnel are required to adhere to the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017</i> and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the <i>Children First Act 2015</i> ✓ 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 conduct for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff) ✓ The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The school has in place a policy and procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum ✓ The school has in place a code of behaviour for students ✓ The school has an RE policy to cater for the needs of all students ✓ The school has protocols in place for work experience in an external organisation ✓ The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of student teacher placements ✓ The school has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by students ✓ The school has in place an Acceptable Use policy in respect of usage of all Computers, Internet and Social Media ✓ The school has a Special Educational Needs policy
Pastoral Care	Potential Risks Associated	Mitigation of Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One-to-one counselling ● School outings ● School trips involving overnight stay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Risk of harm in one-to-one counselling situation ➤ Risk of harm not being recognised by school personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The school has a Health and Safety policy ✓ The school has in place a Code of Behaviour for students

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School trips involving foreign travel ● Care of students with special educational needs, including intimate care where needed, ● Management of challenging behaviour amongst students. ● Administration of Medicine ● Administration of First Aid ● Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe ● Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst students. ● Training of school personnel in child protection matters ● Care of students with specific vulnerabilities/ needs such as:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students from ethnic minorities/migrants - Members of the Traveller community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) students - Students perceived to be LGBT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by school personnel ➤ Risk of harm to students through bullying when away from home on school trips ➤ Risk of mishandling of students with challenging behaviour ➤ Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of student ➤ Risk of harm to students through lack of understanding of specific needs, including sexual identity, religious and ethnic background ➤ Risk of harm to student ➤ Risk of harm caused by one student to another via inappropriate social media contact, texting, digital device or other ➤ Risk of harm to students by the use of inappropriate or over-harsh sanctions for bullying/misuse of social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All staff have been provided with the Child Safeguarding Statement and have had appropriate training. ✓ The school has an Anti-bullying policy and procedures in place which have been explained to the whole school community. ✓ School Personnel are required to adhere to the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017</i> and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the <i>Children First Act 2015</i> ✓ The school has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by students ✓ The school has in place an Acceptable Use policy in respect of usage of all Computers, Internet and Social Media ✓ The school has a code of conduct for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff) ✓ The school has appointed qualified Guidance teachers ✓ The school has recruited teachers with Special Education Needs training and qualifications
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students of minority religious faiths - Students in care - Students on CPNS ➤ Supporting students involved in misuse of Social Media ➤ Sanctioning students involved in misuse of Social Media 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The school appoints qualified SNA's where deemed necessary and funded by the DES ✓ The school has a Tour policy which covers protocols for overnight stays ✓ The school has a Special Educational Needs policy ✓ The school has an active Pastoral Team with particular understanding of the needs of the students in its care, including their background ✓ The school has a set of procedures in relation to the administration of medicines
Recruitment	Potential Risks Associated	Mitigation of Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principal ● Deputy Principal(s) ● School Leadership Team ● Teachers ● SNA's ● Administration staff ● Caretaking Staff ● Housekeeping Staff ● Cleaning Staff ● Short or long-term Contractors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Risk of harm to students by personnel who are not qualified ➤ Risk of harm to students from personnel who have a history of unacceptable practices in previous employment ➤ Risk of harm to students from a member of personnel with a history of abuse ➤ Risk of harm to a student by a member of personnel unwilling to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 an Employee Handbook and Induction programme for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff) ✓ When appointing, detailed references are sought

	commit to the expected standards of the school	✓ The school has a rigorous interview process.
Sporting Activities	Potential Risks Associated	Mitigation of Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Travelling to matches ● Changing in school's changing room ● Changing in the changing rooms of other schools ● Annual School Spirit Day ● School trips involving overnight stay ● Administration of First Aid following a sports injury ● Use of external personnel to support sports and other extra-curricular activities ● Sports coaches ● Volunteers/Parents/Guardians in sports activities ● Student PE teachers ● Use of social media to record and comment on sporting events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Risk of a student being harmed by a member of school personnel, a member of staff of another organisation or other person while participating in sporting activities ➤ Risk of harm to student while student is receiving First Aid treatment ➤ Risk of harm due to inadequate code of behaviour ➤ Risk of harm in one-to-one coaching situation ➤ Risk of harm to student due to lack of experience of Student PE teachers ➤ 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 caused by member of school personnel or a student circulating inappropriate material in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All staff and volunteers are Garda Vetted ✓ All staff have been provided with the Child Safeguarding Statement and have had appropriate training. ✓ School sports personnel are required to adhere to the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017</i> and also are required to adhere to the <i>Children First Act 2015</i> ✓ The school implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle, incorporating PE ✓ The school has an Acceptable Use Policy in relation to the use of digital media ✓ The School has a Code of Behaviour, drafted in consultation with all stakeholders. ✓ The School has a supervision protocol for all major events.

	<p>relation to sporting activities via social media, texting, digital device or other manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The school has a supervision protocol for transport to and from sporting activities✓ Coaching Staff are trained in First Aid✓ The school has a Tour policy which covers protocols for overnight stays✓ The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of student teacher placements✓ The school has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by pupils✓ The school has in place a Code of Behaviour for students
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