Loreto Secondary School,
Letterkenny,
Co Donegal

Child Protection Policy

The Designated Liaison Person is
Ms Gerardine Mullen

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is
Ms Shiobaun McGee

Loreto Secondary School,
Letterkenny,
Co Donegal

Child Protection Policy

The Designated Liaison Person is
Ms Gerardine Mullen

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is
Ms Shiobaun McGee

Child Safeguarding Statement

Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny is a post-primary school providing post-primary education to students from first year to sixth year, ranging in age from 12 to 19 years.

1. 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 **Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny** has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

2. **The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is: Ms Gerardine Mullen**
3. **The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is: Mrs Shiobaun McGee**

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 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) 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 and welfare matters.

1. 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.

- Supervisors during school day and at after school study

- Caretakers / secretaries (Cleaning staff and canteen staff are employed by outside companies (ISS and Get Fresh)/
- 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 substitute teachers in the case of absenteeism
- Student teachers undertaking training placement in school
- Students / adults on other placements/classroom observations.

- Use of Information and Communication Technology and social media by students in school.
- Use of Information and Communication Technology and social media by staff in school.
- Use of video/photography/other media to record school events, both inside and outside of school.
- Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour including detention of students, confiscation of phones etc.
- Students from the school participating in work experience outside school.
- After school use of school premises by other organisations.
- Use of school premises by other organisations during the school day.

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 student being harmed in the school by a member of school personnel.
- Risk of student being harmed in the school by another student.
- Risk of student being harmed in the school by volunteer or visitor to the school.
- Risk of student being harmed by a member of school personnel, a member of staff of another organisation or other person while student is participating in out-of-school activities e.g. school trip, sporting activities.
- Risk of harm due to bullying of student in school.
- Risk of harm to students through bullying when away from home on school trips.
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of students in school.
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of students while attending out of school activities.
- Risk of mishandling of students with challenging behaviour.
- Risk of harm to students through lack of understanding of specific needs, including sexual identity, religious and ethnic background.
- Risk of harm while on work experience.
- Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communications between student and another student or adult.
- Risk of harm due to students inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones and other devices while at school.
- Risk of harm to students with SEN who have particular vulnerabilities.
- Risk of harm to student while a student is receiving intimate care.
- Risk of harm due to inadequate Code of Behaviour.
- Risk of harm to student while student is receiving First Aid treatment.

- Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching, counselling, meeting, coaching situation.

- 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 or a student accessing / circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner.
- 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.
- Risk of harm to students by personnel who are not qualified.
- Risk of harm to a student by a member of school personnel unwilling to commit to the expected standards of the school.

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

- The DLP and Deputy DLP have attended a full day of the mandatory training for DLPs and Deputy DLPs on 19 April 2018.
- 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 lockers, toilets, changing rooms and outside etc.
- The school has a supervision protocol for transport to and from school events and extracurricular activities.
- The school has a Health and Safety policy.
- The school has in place a Code of Behaviour for students.
- The school has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by students.
- 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 implements in full the SPHE curriculum.
- The school implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle.
- The school has an RE policy to cater for the needs of all students.
- The school has a rigorous interview process for the appointment of all staff.
- The school has appointed qualified Guidance teachers.
- The school has recruited teachers with Special Education Needs training and qualifications.
- The school appoints qualified Special Needs Assistants deemed necessary and funded by the DES.
- The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting.
- All staff, staff employed to work with students on a short-term basis and volunteers are Garda Vetted.
- Host families for visiting international students, organised by our school are vetted in advance of each student's arrival.
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* are made available to all school personnel.
- All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement.
- 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.*

- 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 and welfare 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* .

4 • In this school **the Board has appointed the above named DLP, Gerardine Mullen, as the "relevant person"** (as defined in the *Children First Act 2015* Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)) to be the first point of contact in respect of the Child Safeguarding Statement.

5 • **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 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) 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 this statement.
- The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school's website, the DES website or will be made available on request by the school.

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

7 We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. We are committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as is 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 10th May, 2018, and it is reviewed and ratified annually, and most recently on **9th October, 2023**

Signed: _____ Signed: Gerardine Mullen

Chairperson, Board of Management Principal / Secretary, Board of Management

Date: 9/10/23 Date: 9/10/2023.

Appendix 1: Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny
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*, Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023), the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny.

1. List of school activities

- Daily arrival and dismissal of students.
- Recreation breaks for students.
- Classroom teaching.
- One-to-one and small group teaching.
- One-to-one counselling.
- One-to-one meetings with teachers, year heads, senior management, guidance counsellors, SEN team.
- After-school study.
- Outdoor teaching activities.
- Sporting activities.
- School outings.
- School trips involving overnight stay.
- School trips involving foreign travel.
- Annual Sports Day.
- Joint activities with students from local schools during the school day and after school e.g. classes, extracurricular activities.
- Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in school.
- Fundraising events involving students.
- Use of off-site facilities for school activities.
- School transport arrangements including use of bus escorts.
- Care of students with special educational needs, including intimate care where needed.
- Management of challenging behaviour amongst students, including appropriate use of restraint where required.
- Administration of Medicine.
- Administration of First Aid.
- Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Wellbeing.
- Prevention of, and dealing with bullying amongst students.
- Training of school personnel in child protection and welfare matters.
- Use of external personnel to supplement curriculum.
- Use of external personnel to support sports and other extracurricular activities.
- Care of students with specific vulnerabilities / needs such as:
  - Students from ethnic minorities/migrants
  - Members of the Traveller community
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) students
  - Students perceived to be LGBT
  - Students of minority religious faiths
  - Students in care
  - Students on Child Protection Notification System.
- Recruitment of school personnel including:
  - Principal and deputy principal/s
  - Teachers
  - Special Needs Assistants

- The school supports the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* and complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff.
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum.
- The school has protocols in place for work experience in an external organisation.
- The school has in place procedures in respect of student teacher placements.
- The school has a Special Educational Needs policy.
- The school has in place an Acceptable Use policy in respect of usage of all Computers, Internet and Social Media.
- The school has an Induction programme for new school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff).
- The school has in place clear procedures for one-to-one teaching activities, one-to-one counselling and meetings.
- The school has an active Student Support (Pastoral Care) Team with particular understanding of the needs of the students in its care, including their background.
- The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan and Team.

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 9/10/'23. It shall be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed _____ **Date:** 9/10/23
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ **Date:** 9/10/'23.
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management