



St. Columba's College

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# Risk Assessment & Child Safeguarding Statement

Reviewed September 2024. Next date for review is September 2025.

Person Responsible for updating policy: Warden, Sub-Warden.

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## Child Safeguarding Statement

St. Columba's College is a post-primary boarding school providing 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. Columba'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 Mark Boobbyer
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Julian Girdham
4. The Relevant Person is Mark Boobbyer

Contact Information for Relevant Person: [warden@stcolumbas.ie](mailto:warden@stcolumbas.ie) 01 4906791

*(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. This person can also be the DLP)*

5. The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

**The school will:**

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

6. The following procedures/measures are in place:

- In relation to any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child attending the school, the school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the gov.ie website.
- In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, the school adheres to the statutory vetting requirements of the [National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Acts 2012 to 2016](#) and to the wider duty of care guidance set out in relevant Garda vetting and recruitment circulars published by the Department of Education and available on the gov.ie website.

- In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to staff in respect of the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) the school:
  - Has provided each member of staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
  - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
  - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
  - Encourages Board of Management members to avail of relevant training
  - The Board of Management maintains records of all staff and Board member training
  
- In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023), including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015. The Children's First Act 2015 defines harm as, in relation to a child:
  - (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or
  - (b) sexual abuse of the child,

whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise.
  
- All children will be equally protected from harm regardless of race, ability, ethnicity or sexual orientation.
  
- All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015. There is a procedure in place for maintaining a list of mandated persons. All registered teachers, nurses, social workers and members of the clergy employed by the College are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015. All employees who are not registered teachers but who work with students either in the classroom or boarding facilities will be expected to report concerns and in all respects work as mandated persons.
  
- 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.


- 7. 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 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 originally adopted by the Board of Management on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018. This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management in September 2024.

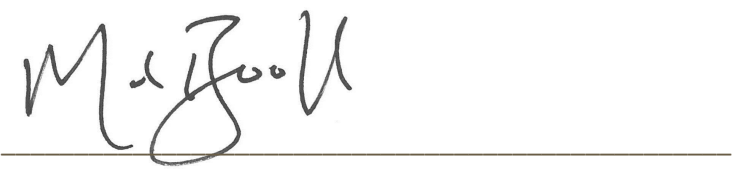
25th September 2024

### Declarations

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in September 2024. Next date for review, September 2025.



Chairperson of the Board of Management



The Warden

# Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

## Written Assessment of Risk of St. Columba's College

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 (revised 2023)*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of St. Columba's College.

### 1. List of school activities

- Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one teaching
- One-to-one counselling
- Online teaching and learning remotely
- Outdoor teaching activities
- Sporting Activities
- School outings
- School trips involving overnight stay
- School trips involving foreign travel
- Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in schools
- Provision of residential facilities for boarders
- 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, including intimate care
- Administration of Medicine
- Administration of First Aid
- Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE
- 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 extra-curricular
- Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/ needs such as
  - Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children
  - Pupils perceived to be LGBT
  - Pupils of minority religious faiths
- 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
- Participation by pupils in religious ceremonies/ instruction external to the school

- Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school
- 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 events
- After school use of school premises by other organisations
- Use of school premises by other organisation during school day
- Catering of meals (Breakfast/Dinner/Supper/Evening snack and breaks)

### Boarders only: In addition to the above, boarders are also engaged in

- General activities: Meetings in boarding houses, group or one-to-one
- Before chapel starts, boarders are getting ready for school in dorms, toilets, showers, getting laundry from the linen room etc...
- During break and lunch boarders may return to dorm to collect books, get changed or to rest before classes resume.
- Boarders can visit the surgery at the times permitted in the Green Book
- After games on Wednesdays and Saturdays boarders may go to the local shops with permission from their housemaster/housemistress.
- On Sundays boarders may take an exeat to leave the College with permission from their housemaster/housemistress.
- All boarders will attend prep in the evening (Mon. to Fri), Forms1-4form will be supervised by a senior pupil or member of staff. A record of comings and goings will be recorded in the prep book. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> can study in the library with supervision or in house.
- After prep boarders can attend evening snack which is also supervised by the person who took their prep.
- During the summer term boarders can be brought for a swim in the pool instead of evening snack. This must be supervised by a member of staff, not a senior pupil.
- All must return directly to house after the evening snack.
- Once in house each form will have a different time for lights to be out at.
- Designated senior pupils will take the lights and all boarders must put their mobile phones in the house lock box for the night.
- The member of the house team on duty will do several checks around the house to ensure that all are silent.
- At the end of the night the member of the house team will ensure that all doors and windows are locked.

## 2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities

- Risk of harm not being recognised by school personnel
- Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by school personnel
- Risk of child being harmed in the school by a member of school personnel
- Risk of child being harmed in the school by another child
- Risk of child being harmed in the school by volunteer or visitor to the school
- Risk of child being harmed by a member of school personnel, a member of staff of another organisation or other person while child participating in out of school activities e.g. school trip, swimming lessons

- Risk of harm due to inappropriate use of online remote teaching and learning communication platform such as an uninvited person accessing the lesson link, students being left unsupervised for long periods of time in breakout rooms
- Risk of harm due to bullying of child
- 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 to child while a child is receiving intimate care
- Risk of harm due to inadequate code of behaviour
- Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching, counselling, coaching situation
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel communicating with pupils in appropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner

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

- All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school's *Child Safeguarding Statement*
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* are made available to all school personnel
- School Personnel are required to adhere to the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the *Children First Act 2015*
- The school implements in full the 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 a supervision policy to ensure appropriate supervision of children during meal times, assembly, dismissal and breaks.
- The School has a Policy for Weekends and Evenings Duty Policy.
- 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 adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting and has adopted an appropriate policy in this regard.
- The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
- The school has a Special Educational Needs policy
- 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 members to avail of relevant training
- Maintains records of all staff and board member training
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the administration of First Aid
- The school has in place a code of behaviour for pupils
- The school has an Acceptable Use Policy in place, to include provision for online teaching and learning remotely, and has communicated this policy to parents
- The school has in place an ICT policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils
- The school has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by pupils
- The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan
- The school has in place a Policy on Guidance and Counselling.
- The school has in place a policy on RSE.
- The school has a Cúram team that is dedicated to looking after the welfare of the children.
- The school has appropriate signage for visitors and volunteers.
- Members of clubs that are authorised to use school facilities and/or any external contractors working on site from time to time are made aware of the school's child protection requirements.

**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.

This risk assessment was originally completed by the Board of Management on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018. It is reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement. Next date for review is September 2025.


25th September 2024





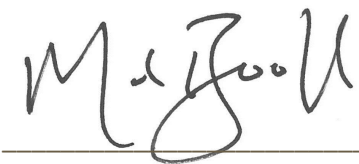
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Chairperson of the Board of Management



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The Warden