St. Paul's Secondary School

OUGHTERARD, CO. GALWAY H91 PT86

Tel: (091) 552689 **Email:** admin@stpaulsoughterard.ie

Mandatory Template 1: Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment Template

Child Safeguarding Statement

St Paul's Secondary School, Oughterard is a post-primary 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 Paul's Secondary 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 *(revised 2023)* as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement

2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Linda O'Hara**

3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Breda-Ann deCourcey**

4 The Relevant Person is **Linda O'Hara**
(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, 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.

- 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 5th December 2023.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on 25th February 2026.

Signed: Eva Ní Loinsigh

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 25/02/2026

Signed: Linda O'Hara

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 25/02/2026

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

ST PAUL'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

Written Assessment of Risk of St. Paul's Secondary School, Oughterard, Co. Galway.

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. Paul's Secondary School, Oughterard.

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
- 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
- Fundraising events involving pupils
- Use of off-site facilities for school activities
- School transport arrangements
- Care of children with Special Educational Needs including intimate care where needed
- Care of any vulnerable adult students including intimate care where needed
- Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils including appropriate use of restraint where required
- 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 the curriculum
- Use of external personnel to support sports and other extra-curricular activities
- Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities / needs such as
    - Students with disabilities
    - AEN students, including neurodivergence
    - Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrant
    - Members from the Travelling |Community
    - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or transgender children
    - Pupils perceived to be LGBT
    - Pupils of minority religious faiths
    - Children in care
    - Children on CPNS
- Recruitment of school personnel including
    - Teachers/SNAs
    - Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners

    - Sports Coaches
    - External Guest Speakers
    - Volunteers/Parents in school activities
    - Visitors/contractors present during school hours
    - Visitors/contractors present during after school activities
- Participation by pupils in religious ceremonies/religious instruction external to the school
- Use of ICT by pupils in school
- Remote Teaching and Learning on the school digital learning platform (MS Teams) during temporary school closure/should a student have to restrict his/her movements as directed by Public Health Medical Personnel
- 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 the school
- Use of video/photography/other media to record school events
- After school use of premises by other organisations
- Evening Study

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 members of school personnel, a member of staff of another organisation or another 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 in school
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision while attending out of school activities
- Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communication between child and another child or adult
- Risk of harm due to children inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones or other devices while at school or on school trips
- Risk of harm to children with AEN who have particular vulnerabilities
- Risk of harm to child while a child is receiving intimate care
- Risk of harm to child due to inadequate Code of Behaviour
- Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching, counselling and coaching situation
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel/student communicating with pupils in an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device, school digital learning platform or other manner
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel/student accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device, school digital learning platform or other manner
- Risk of harm caused by a member of the public accessing/circulating inappropriate material via school digital learning platform.
- Risk of harm due to presence of therapy dog
- Risk of harm caused by students inappropriately accessing / using PE Hall equipment

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* 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 implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle
- The school has a *Bí Cineálta* / 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 yard supervision procedures to ensure adequate supervision during breaks and in respect of such areas as toilets
- 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
- The school has Codes of Conduct for school personnel
- The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
- The school has a Special Educational Needs Policy
- The school has procedures for the administration of medication to pupils
- 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 all staff to avail of relevant training
    - Encourages board of management members to avail of relevant training
    - Maintains records of all staff and board training
- The school has in place procedures for the administration of First Aid
- The school has in place a Code of Behaviour for pupils
- The school has in place an ICT policy (AUP) in respect of usage of ICT by pupils
- The school has in place a Distance Learning Policy
- The school has in place a policy governing the use of smart phones and tablet devices in the school as per circular 38/2018
- The school undertakes anti-racism awareness initiatives
- The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of pupils of the school undertaking work experience in external organisations.
- The school's therapy dog is insured and registered with Irish Therapy Dogs

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 (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 has been completed by the Board of Management on 25th February 2026. It shall be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed Córa Ní Loinsigh Date 25/02/2026

Córa Ní Loinsigh
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed Linda O'Hara Date 25/02/2026

Linda O'Hara
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management