



St. Mary's Diocesan School

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Vetting Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Vetting Policy (hereafter the "Policy") is to support and inform the work of St. Mary's Diocesan School, Drogheda, Co. Louth with regard to the application of vetting practices as part of the recruitment process.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, as amended by the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016, are the primary legislative sources governing this area. This Policy has been framed in compliance with Department of Education Circular Letter 31/2016 and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2025. The School's Data Protection Policy governs all processing of personal data associated with the conduct of vetting.

Ensuring the safeguarding of children is of paramount importance for St. Mary's Diocesan School, and the vetting of employees and volunteers is an essential part of fulfilling this obligation. This Policy is designed to assist the school with fulfilling its responsibilities and statutory obligations under the relevant legislation. It applies to all school personnel, including teaching staff, non-teaching staff, volunteers, students, parents/guardians involved in school activities, contractors and visitors to the School whose role brings them into contact with students.

The Principal will ensure that a copy of this Policy is available to staff, students, parents/guardians and prospective employees and volunteers.

The Joint Managerial Body (JMB) is a registered organisation with the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) and St. Mary's Diocesan School is an affiliate organisation of the JMB for the purposes of vetting. Non-teaching staff and volunteers are vetted through the JMB, and registered teachers are vetted through the Teaching Council.

2. Definitions

“Liaison Person” – the authorised individual within a registered organisation who acts as the link with the National Vetting Bureau (NVB), applying for and receiving sensitive vetting disclosures on behalf of persons working with children or vulnerable adults, and managing the vetting process for the Registered Organisation.

“Registered Organisation” – in this context, the Teaching Council or the Joint Managerial Body (JMB), being an organisation authorised by the NVB to process vetting applications.

“Relevant work or activities” – in the context of a school or centre for education, means any work or activity carried out by a person where a necessary and regular part of that work or activity consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons.

3. Purpose

Section 12 of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 requires a school authority to obtain a vetting disclosure from the NVB prior to the employment of, contracting of, permitting or placement of, any person to undertake relevant work or activities with children or vulnerable persons. This requirement applies to all appointments made by the school, including full-time, part-time and substitute appointments, as well as volunteers and persons engaged on an ad hoc basis.

It is a criminal offence for a school authority to permit a person to commence relevant work or activities without first obtaining a vetting disclosure from the NVB. A school authority shall not permit any person to undertake relevant work or activities pending the completion of the vetting process.

The purpose of this Policy is therefore to:

Ensure that St. Mary’s Diocesan School is a safe and secure environment for children and vulnerable persons

Ensure that vetting of school personnel is carried out to the highest standards of good practice, in compliance with all legal and ethical obligations and in an open, transparent and just manner

Ensure that all applicants for vetting are assured that the highest standards of confidentiality are observed

4. Procedures

The Principal of St. Mary’s Diocesan School is the person responsible for the implementation of this Policy and for liaising with the Liaison Person in the Teaching Council or the JMB, as appropriate, in relation to vetting.

The Principal will oversee the vetting process on behalf of the school in conjunction with the Teaching Council, the JMB and the National Vetting Bureau.

In cases where no statutory vetting obligation exists (see sections 5.3 and 6.4 of Circular 31/2016), the school must consider, having regard to its duty of care to its students, whether it should seek an up-to-date vetting disclosure in respect of the person (see section 9 of Circular 31/2016).

5. Recruitment

Thorough recruitment procedures must always be followed and are an essential element of effective child safeguarding practice. Vetting does not take the place of recruitment procedures but forms part of those procedures.

Recruitment procedures in St. Mary's Diocesan School include:

Checking references and previous employment history

Asking specific questions concerning child protection and safeguarding during interviews

Verification of identity and qualifications

(See Appendix 1)

6. Vetting for Categories of Employees / Applicants

General:

All offers of employment or engagement are conditional on the satisfactory outcome of the vetting process

Failure to complete the vetting process will disqualify the candidate and any offer of employment will be revoked

The provision of inaccurate information on a vetting application may result in withdrawal of an offer

Failure to disclose a conviction (other than as permitted under section 14A of the Act) may also result in withdrawal

A Statutory Declaration and Form of Undertaking must be signed by all appointees

Where a person changes employment between schools, a Statutory Declaration is valid if made in the same or previous calendar year

A statement confirming that the School's Child Safeguarding Statement has been read and understood must be signed

Teaching Personnel:

Candidates appointed to teaching positions must be vetted via the Teaching Council. Vetting disclosures must be shared with the Principal using the Teaching Council “Share Vetting Disclosure” function.

It does not follow that vetting deemed satisfactory for Teaching Council registration purposes will, in all cases, be satisfactory for employment purposes. The determination rests with the Board’s Vetting Policy.

Non-Teaching Personnel

All non-teaching personnel are vetted through the JMB, which liaises with the NVB on the School’s behalf.

Student Teachers

Student teachers must be vetted through the JMB unless a prior written agreement exists with the relevant Higher Education Institution. Written confirmation of vetting must be received and the School may require sight of the disclosure.

Students and Work Experience

Students participating in work experience that constitutes relevant work must be vetted in accordance with legislation, age thresholds and consent requirements. Students under the age of 16 cannot be vetted. Students aged 16 or 17 need parental consent via the NVB3 form. Students over 18 can give their own consent.

Students going out on work experience should be well prepared by the school to cope with potentially difficult situations. They should be assured of school support in such instances. Safety of students should be discussed with employees before placements begin.

Other Appointees

Volunteers, independent contractors and coaches must be interviewed by the Principal and vetted through the JMB prior to engagement, unless a written reciprocal vetting arrangement exists.

7. Exemptions

The School is not required to obtain a vetting disclosure in the following circumstances:

- a) Persons employed on behalf of the State Examinations Commission
- b) Occasional unpaid volunteers who do not engage in teaching, coaching, mentoring or supervision

8. Disclosures

Where no criminal record or specified information is disclosed, the vetting outcome is deemed satisfactory.

A disclosure may include “**specified information**”, defined as:

“information other than criminal convictions held by An Garda Síochána that leads to a bona fide belief that a person poses a threat to children or vulnerable persons.”

The Act states:

‘Where a member of staff of the Bureau considers there is specified information relating to a person who is the subject of an application for vetting disclosure, he or she shall refer the matter to the Chief Bureau Officer for assessment and determination under section 15 as to whether the information concerned should be disclosed. (3) The Chief Bureau Officer shall assess the application for vetting disclosure and the specified information relating to the person who is the subject of that application but he or she shall not make a determination that that information concerned should be disclosed unless—

(a) he or she reasonably believes that that information is of such a nature as to give rise to a bona fide concern that the person concerned may—

(i) harm any child or vulnerable person,

(ii) cause any child or vulnerable person to be harmed,

(iii) put any child or vulnerable person at risk of harm,

(iv) attempt to harm any child or vulnerable person, or

(v) incite another person to harm any child or vulnerable person, and

(b) he or she is satisfied that its disclosure is necessary, proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of children or vulnerable persons or both, as the case may be.’

Because of the nature of “specified information” and the requirements in the Act, including an appeal process available to the vetting applicant before “specified information” can be disclosed, the Board will determine whether a vetting applicant whose disclosure from the NVB includes “specified information” is a suitable person to be employed in the school. In such a case, the vetting applicant will be afforded an opportunity to make representations to the Board before the Board comes to a decision on the matter.

The following schedule also sets out other offences or categories of offences which may disqualify. In deciding whether a particular conviction renders a candidate unsuitable for appointment, the school will have regard to:

- the nature of the offence and its possible relevance to the post;
- the date of the offence (offences many years in the past may be less relevant than more recent offences);
- the frequency of the offence (a series of offences will give more cause for concern than an isolated conviction).
- the age of the applicant at the time of the offence (offences which are not sexual / violent in nature or are minor drug related offences committed before the age of 18 will be judged in that light)

The principal will meet the applicant in person and in private. The applicant will be informed of the nature of the disclosure and will be given an opportunity to respond to it.

The principal is authorised by the Board to determine if the outcome of the vetting of a candidate has been satisfactory or not, the determination being made in accordance with this Policy. Should the principal deem it necessary, he/she may consult the Chairperson of the Board before reaching a decision.

The only circumstance in which a disclosure of convictions or prosecutions would be made known to the Board would be where the applicant consents that they be consulted.

9. Implementation

This Policy takes effect from the date of adoption by the Board of Management of St. Mary's Diocesan School. It forms part of the School's recruitment documentation and safeguarding framework.

10. Review

This Policy will be reviewed periodically, taking account of updates from the Department of Education and Youth, the National Vetting Bureau, the Teaching Council and the Joint Managerial Body, and feedback from the school community.

Schedule of Offences

The following schedule sets out those offences or categories of offence which will automatically disqualify candidates. It also sets out other offences or categories of offence which may disqualify a candidate. In deciding whether a particular conviction renders a candidate unsuitable for appointment, the school will have regard to:

- the nature of the offence and its possible relevance to the post;
- the date of the offence (offences many years in the past may be less relevant than more recent offences);
- the frequency of the offence (a series of offences will give more cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction).
- offences which are not sexual or violent in nature or drug related offences of a minor nature committed before the age of 18 will be judged in the light of the age of the applicant at the time of the offence.

Where the vetting process discloses pending prosecutions or unsuccessful prosecutions or 'specified information', as defined in the Vetting Act, such disclosures will be assessed in the light of the nature, age and frequency of the alleged offence(s) and of the age of the candidate.

Category/Type of Offence	Automatic disqualification from employment	May or may not disqualify	May be acceptable
Homicide	Murder Manslaughter		
Sexual offences	Rape Rape under section 4 Unlawful carnal knowledge Aggravated sexual assault Sexual assault Sexual offences (other)		
Assault	False imprisonment Abduction Assault causing harm Non-fatal offences against the person including threats to kill, syringe attacks, endangering traffic	Assault (minor) Assault (other)	

Theft/ Burglary/Robbery	Aggravated burglary	Theft from person Theft (other) Burglary Robbery of establishment/ cash/goods Robbery from person	
Criminal Damage	Arson	Criminal damage	
Drugs	Possession of drugs for sale or supply	Simple possession of drugs	
Firearms	Possession of firearms Discharge of firearm Possession of offensive weapon		
Traffic		Intoxicated driving a vehicle Intoxicated in charge of a vehicle Unauthorised taking of a vehicle Dangerous driving causing death Hit and run (leaving the scene of an accident)	Speeding Dangerous driving Careless driving General road traffic offences
Public Order Offences		Drunkenness offences	
Fraud offences		Fraud offences	
Explosives Offences	Explosives offences		
Money laundering	Money laundering		
Trafficking of illegal immigrants	Trafficking of illegal immigrants		
Terrorist Offences	Terrorist offences		

APPENDIX 1 – Recruitment Process and Child Protection

This school owes a duty of care to its students and therefore the school must satisfy itself, in so far as is reasonably practicable, that no person employed or engaged by the school poses a threat to students. Effective recruitment practices are integral to the School's child safeguarding framework and should include verification of identity, qualifications and employment history. Thorough reference checking with previous employers including specific enquiries regarding suitability to work with children is strongly advised. The Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025 note that a reference should be sought from the most recent employer and that the intention to obtain references should be made clear in the advertising of any position.

The interview process should assess the candidate's understanding of and commitment to safeguarding obligations and could include the following question:

Are there any child protection, safeguarding, or other issues that may affect your suitability to work with children or young people, that you wish to bring to the attention of the interview panel?

The school should inform candidates that all responses furnished in respect of the above question will be treated as confidential and will be subject to any reporting obligations which may be imposed on the school. These include any obligations imposed by "*Children First*" (published by the Department of Health), the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2025 (published by the Department of Education and Youth) or any legal obligations imposed on the school to facilitate the effective investigation of crime.

A completed [Statutory Declaration](#) must be provided to the school authority by all persons appointed to teaching and non-teaching positions of any duration unless the person has previously provided the school authority with a statutory declaration which was made during the same or previous calendar year. In addition, a [Form of Undertaking](#) must be signed by all persons prior to appointment to any teaching or non-teaching position of any duration. The Form of Undertaking and completed Statutory Declaration must be retained by the school authority.

The clause provided below can be inserted into Contracts of Employment and into a letter of appointment in the case of a short-term casual appointment.

It is a fundamental term of your employment in this school that you agree that you have made a full, and accurate disclosure in reply to questions asked at interview, relating to any child welfare issues. If it transpires, during the course of your future employment, that you have not made such a full and accurate disclosure, the failure to do so will be treated as a fundamental breach of this contract of employment, which may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

These measures operate in addition to, and not in substitution for, statutory vetting requirements. Where a satisfactory vetting outcome has not been achieved by the applicant or volunteer the placement in the school cannot proceed.