St. Mary's Diocesan School

Beamore Road, Drogheda, Co. Louth, A92TF24

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Principal: Catherina McNicholas

Deputy Principals: Cerrie Byrne, Lorraine Noone, Nicola Oglesby

Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment 2026

Child Safeguarding

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

For:	**St. Mary's Diocesan School**	*(School Name)*
At:	**Beamore Rd., Drogheda, Co. Louth.**	*(School Address)*

This school is a: (tick appropriate) ☐primary ☒post-primary ☐ special school

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) and 2025, Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025 and Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, 2nd ed. (Tusla, 2024), the board of management has adopted the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment 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 Schools 2025 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.

Name of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP):

Catherina McNicholas

Name of the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP/DDLP):

Lorraine Noone

In the absence of the DLP, the Deputy DLP shall assume responsibilities of the DLP

Name of Relevant Person

Catherina McNicholas

(In schools this person is the DLP)

Relevant Person can be contacted on:

041 9837581	principal@stmarysds.ie

Under the Children First Act 2015 Relevant Person means a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the Child Safeguarding Statement. This person is nominated by the board of management to manage and provide oversight of child protection concerns/allegations of child abuse.

Name of Chairperson of the board of management, or in an ETB school the Chief Executive or their delegate:

Fergus Minogue

In the event that both DLP and DDLP are absent and unavailable, and where there is no staff member formally acting in their role, the chairperson of the board of management, or in an ETB school the chief executive or their delegate, assumes the role of DLP.

The board of management recognises that child protection and safeguarding permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, procedures, practices and activities. In all of these, 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 happening to children and protect members of school personnel from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of child abuse.
- ☐ Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children.
- ☐ Fully respect confidentiality requirements as set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025 in dealing with child protection matters.
- ☐ Adhere to the above principles in relation to any vulnerable adult.

Procedures and Measures in Place

Our Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance 2017*, and *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, 2nd ed. (Tusla, 2024),* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025.* In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment,

the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

> Procedure for the Management of Allegations of Abuse or Misconduct against School Personnel Relating to a Child Availing of Our Service

~ Where any member of school personnel is the subject of any investigation in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in relation to a child attending the school, the school is required to adhere to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of *the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025* and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the gov.ie website.

> Procedure for the Safe Recruitment and Selection of School Personnel to Work With Children

~ The school is required to adhere to the requirements of the Vetting Act. The selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, requires the school to adhere 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 Youth and available on the gov.ie website and as outlined in Chapter 10 of the procedures.

~ A written protocol is in place authorising immediate action for cases which require an employee to be immediately absented from school for child safeguarding reasons.

> Procedure for Provision of and Access to Child Safeguarding Training and Information, Including the Identification of the Occurrence of Harm

~ The school provides information and training to members of school personnel in relation to the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) as follows:

~ The school has provided each member of school personnel, including any new members of school personnel, (employees and volunteers, board of management members, student teachers and those on work experience) with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.

~ The school ensures that members of school personnel have availed of relevant training and completed child protection training.

~ The school encourages board of management members to avail of any relevant training and complete child protection training.

~ The board of management ensures that records of all staff and board member child protection training are maintained.

> Procedure for the Reporting of Child Protection or Welfare Concerns to Tusla

~ All members of school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the *Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025*, in relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla. Mandated reporting applies to all registered teachers and any other mandated person who may be employed by the school, for example a chaplain or nurse. A full list of those people who are mandated persons is set out in Appendix 1 procedures.

> Procedure for Maintaining a List of the Persons (if any) in the Relevant Service Who Are Mandated Persons

~ There is a procedure in place to maintain a list of mandated persons. Schools may on occasion employ additional staff who are mandated by virtue of their profession. This list will include all registered teachers and identify additional employees that are not registered teachers.

> Procedure for Appointing a Relevant Person (In schools this person is the DLP)

~ There is a procedure in place for appointing a relevant person.

The various procedures referred to in this Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment can be accessed via the school's website, the gov.ie website or will be made available on request by the school.

In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, the Addendum to Children First 2019 and 2025, and the *Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025,* the board of management 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.

Note: The procedures and measures in place outlined above, are not intended as exhaustive list. Individual boards of management shall also include in this section such other procedures and measures that are of relevance to the school.

This statement has been published on the school's website or will be made available on request by the school. It has been provided to all members of school personnel, the parents' association (if any), the patron and parents. A copy of this statement and risk assessment will be made available to Tusla and the department if requested.

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

St Mary's DS is an operation encompass school participating in Drogheda's pilot programme.

Operation Encompass is a partnership between An Garda Síochána and schools that supports children who may have been affected by domestic abuse. It enables Gardaí to provide a confidential, limited notification to a designated school contact following a qualifying incident. This allows the school to respond through its existing wellbeing and safeguarding procedures where appropriate. Only minimal information is shared, and confidentiality is strictly maintained. The programme complements, and does not replace, the school's existing child safeguarding responsibilities

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

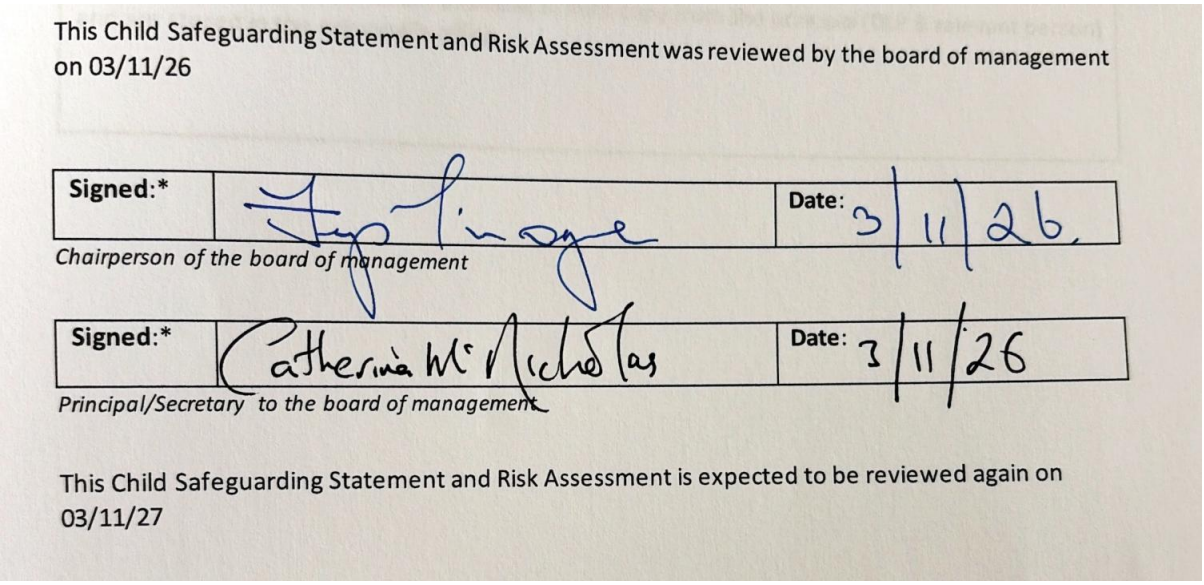
No.	List of School Activities	Risks Identified Against Each School Activity	Procedures/Measures in Place to Mitigate Risk
1	Daily arrival and dismissal	Inadequate supervision; pupils leaving without permission; unauthorised persons on premises	Supervision rota; sign-in/out procedures; visitor protocols; Child Protection Procedures 2025; staff training
2	Recreation breaks	Bullying; peer harm; inadequate supervision	Yard supervision policy; Bí Cineálta policy & anti-bullying procedures; Code of Behaviour; staff vigilance
3	Classroom teaching	Harm by staff/peer; failure to recognise/report concerns	Child Protection Procedures 2025; teacher standards; staff training; open classrooms
4	Online teaching	Unauthorised access; inappropriate communication; unsupervised breakout rooms	Acceptable Use Policy; secure platforms; supervision; parental guidance
5	One-to-one teaching	Boundary issues; allegations; lack of visibility	One-to-one policy; visible locations; record keeping; safeguarding adherence
6	Learning support	Same as above; increased vulnerability	As above; AEN supports; staff training
7	Counselling	Vulnerability; disclosure not reported; dependency	Qualified staff; referral systems; DLP procedures; supervision
8	Outdoor activities	Reduced supervision; contact with public; safety risks	Risk assessments; supervision ratios; Health & Safety policy
9	Sporting activities	Injury; inappropriate coaching; bullying	Garda vetting; supervision; codes of conduct; ; Bí Cineálta policy anti-bullying measures
10	Extra-curricular activities	Reduced oversight; external adults; inappropriate relationships	Supervision structures; vetted personnel; adherence to safeguarding
11	School outings (day)	Missing pupils; external risks; supervision gaps	Trips policy; risk assessment; staff ratios; consent forms
12	Overnight trips	Reduced supervision; behavioural risk; safeguarding in accommodation	Detailed planning; supervision allocation; accommodation vetting

13	Foreign trips	Increased vulnerability; emergencies; unfamiliar safeguarding context	School Tours policy; emergency planning; insurance; enhanced supervision
14	Toilets/changing areas	Bullying; privacy breaches; inappropriate behaviour	Supervision policy; behaviour expectations; staff awareness
15	Annual Sports Day	Large groups; injuries; public access	Supervision plan; first aid; defined roles
16	Fundraising events	Public interaction; money handling; supervision	Staff oversight & supervision; procedures; prior risk assessment,
17	Off-site facilities	Unknown environment; external personnel	Pre-use assessment; agreements; staff supervision maintained
18	School transport	Behaviour issues; limited supervision; external adults	Approved providers; behaviour rules; escorts where needed
19	AEN care (incl. intimate care)	Increased vulnerability; intimate care risks	AEN policy; intimate care plans; training; parental engagement
20	Challenging behaviour management	Injury risk; inappropriate restraint	Code of Behaviour; crisis response guidance; training; recording
21	Administration of medication	Incorrect dosage; lack of consent	Medication policy; consent; training; documentation
22	First Aid	Mismanagement; inadequate response	First Aid policy; trained staff; record keeping
23	SPHE/RSE/Wellbeing	Sensitive topics; disclosures	Curriculum guidance; trained staff; DLP procedures
24	Bullying prevention	Ongoing harm; underreporting	Bí Cineálta procedures & policy; monitoring & supervision
25	Staff training	Risks not recognised/reported	Mandatory training; records maintained; CPD
26	External curriculum personnel	Inappropriate conduct; lack of vetting	Garda vetting; supervision; clear agreements
27	External sports coaches	Boundary issues; poor conduct	Vetting; supervision; code of conduct
28	Vulnerable pupil groups	Discrimination; increased harm risk	Inclusive policies; anti-racism initiatives; care supports

29	Recruitment of staff	Unsuitable persons employed	Garda vetting; adherence to DES procedures, reference checks
30	Volunteers/parents	Unvetted access; boundary issues	Vetting where required; supervision; clear roles
31	Visitors/contractors (school day)	Unauthorised access to pupils	Sign-in procedures; supervision; restricted access
32	Visitors (after school)	Reduced oversight	Supervision arrangements; restricted access
33	Religious activities	External settings; supervision gaps	Risk assessment; supervision; parental consent
34	ICT/social media use	Cyberbullying; inappropriate content	AUP; monitoring; education; sanctions, ; Bí Cineálta policy
35	Code of behaviour sanctions	Inappropriate discipline; isolation risk	Policy adherence; oversight; proportionality
36	Work experience (in school)	Student exposure to risk	Clear procedures; supervision
37	Work experience (external)	External safeguarding risks	Employer checks; preparation; monitoring
38	Student teachers	Inexperience; boundary risks	Placement procedures; oversight; guidance
39	Photography/video	Misuse of images	Consent procedures; data protection policies
40	After-school use of premises	External groups access pupils	Agreements; supervision; safeguarding compliance
41	Use of premises (school day)	Disruption; access risk	Controlled access; agreements
42	Evening study	Reduced supervision; fatigue	Supervision arrangements; behaviour expectations
43	Domestic Abuse	Students living in unknow situations of domestic abuse at home	Operation Encompass Pilot

In accordance with Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirements of Chapter 9 of the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025, the following is the written Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.

In undertaking this Child Safeguarding Statement and 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 Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment was reviewed by the board of management on 03/11/26

Signed:*		**Date:** 3/11/26

Chairperson of the board of management

Signed:*	Catherina Mc Nicholas	**Date:** 3/11/26

Principal/Secretary to the board of management

This Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment is expected to be reviewed again on 03/11/27

Appendix - Location of copies of the Child Protection Procedures and Children First Guidance

https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/policy-information/child-protection-procedures-in-schools/#child-protection-procedures-2025-and-supports-for-schools

https://oide.ie/primary/home/wellbeing/child-protection/

All booklets and procedures are available in hard copy from the principal (DLP & relevant person) and are stored in the principal's office