

## Mandatory Template 1: Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

### Child Safeguarding Statement

Holy Cross Mercy School is a primary/special/post-primary school providing primary/post-primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class/First Year to Leaving Certificate Year (delete as appropriate).

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 [insert school name] 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 **Mrs Alice Davern**.
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Ms Anne Lucey**.
- 4 The Relevant Person is **Mrs Alice Davern**.  
(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](http://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](http://gov.ie) 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](http://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](http://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 **19<sup>th</sup> February 2024**.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on **20<sup>th</sup> December 2023**.

Signed: *Buignell*  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *Alice Davern*  
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 19/2/24

Date: 19/2/24

### Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk at Holy Cross Mercy School.

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 [name of school].

1. List of school activities	2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities –	3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrival and dismissal of pupils</li> <li>• Collection of pupils needs to be considered in light of non-designated adults/siblings collecting children</li> <li>• Bus escorts</li> <li>• Breaks</li> <li>• Managing challenging behaviour</li> <li>• Administration of medicine</li> <li>• One to One teaching</li> <li>• Curricular provision of SPHE</li> <li>• One to one meetings with children</li> <li>• RSE Stay Safe etc – cater for pupils with specific vulnerabilities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants</li> <li>- Members of the Traveller community</li> <li>- Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Pupils perceived to be LGBT</li> <li>- Pupils of minority religious faiths</li> <li>- Children in care</li> <li>- Children on CPNS</li> <li>- Outdoor teaching activities – e.g. P.E. field trips, trails etc (particularly involving outside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of harm not reported properly and promptly by school personnel</li> <li>• Risk of child being harmed in school by a member of the school personnel</li> <li>• Risk of child being harmed by another child</li> <li>• Risk of child being harmed in the school by a volunteer or a visitor to the school</li> <li>• Risk of child being harmed by a member of school personnel, a member of staff of another organisation or other person while the child is participating in out of school activities e.g. school trips, swimming lessons</li> <li>• Risk of harm due to bullying of child</li> <li>• Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children in school</li> <li>• Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children while attending out of school activities</li> <li>• Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communications between a child and another child or adult</li> <li>• Risk of harm due to children inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones and other devices while</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school’s <i>Child Safeguarding Statement</i></li> <li>• The <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> are made available to all school personnel</li> <li>• School Personnel are required to adhere to the <i>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)</i> and <i>Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements.</i></li> <li>• The school implements in full the Stay Safe Programme/within each two year cycle. Sensitive touches lessons covered annually in all classes.</li> <li>• The school implements the SPHE curriculum in full.</li> <li>• The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy as part of the school’s Code of Behaviour which fully adheres to the</li> </ul>

<p>personnel)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sporting activities (particularly involving outside coaches – Garda vetted)</li> <li>• School outings</li> <li>• Intimate Care Policy – including pupils with S.E.N.</li> <li>• Sports’ Day</li> <li>• Fundraising events</li> <li>• Anti-Bullying Policy</li> <li>• Training of Staff in Child Protection</li> <li>• Recruitment of school personnel – following C.P.S.M.A., D.E.S., I.N.T.O procedures.</li> <li>• Facilitators of extra-curricular activities will provide evidence of Garda vetting.</li> <li>• Participation of pupils in religious ceremonies external to the school.</li> <li>• A.U.P. document informing ICT Usage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internet safety activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Applications of sanctions in relation to mobile phones.</li> <li>• Students participating in work placements.</li> <li>• Use of digital media to record school events</li> <li>• Use of school premises by outside organisations outside of school hours</li> <li>• Homework Club/Afterschool Club</li> <li>• Recruitment of school personnel – following C.P.M.S.A, D.E.S, I.N.T.O procedures</li> </ul>	<p>at school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of harm to children with SEN who have particular vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Risk of harm to child while a child is receiving intimate care</li> <li>• Risk of harm due to inadequate Code of Behaviour</li> <li>• Risk of harm in one to one teaching, counselling, coaching situations</li> <li>• Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel, communicating with pupils in appropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner</li> <li>• Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner.</li> </ul>	<p>requirements of the Department’s <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a yard/playground supervision policy to ensure appropriate supervision of children during assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc.</li> <li>• The school has clear procedures in respect of school outings.</li> <li>• The school has a Health &amp; Safety Statement.</li> <li>• The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting.</li> <li>• The school has an Adult Bullying/Sexual Harassment Policy to provide guidance for a supportive workplace where all staff work in an environment free from all forms of harassment and bullying.</li> <li>• Holy Cross Mercy School is committed to creating, maintaining and constantly striving to enhance a positive work environment, where work is done in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality.</li> <li>• Our Respect and Dignity in Our Work – Keeping Our Workplace Positive and Effective Policy informs and guides these principles.</li> <li>• The teaching staff in the school comply</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitators of extra-curricular activities will provide evidence of Garda vetting</li> <li>• Participation of pupils in religious ceremonies external to the school</li> </ul>		<p>with the Teaching Council Professional Code of Conduct for Teachers (2016).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a Special Education Needs policy.</li> <li>• The school has an Intimate Care Policy/Plan in respect of students who require such care.</li> <li>• The school has a policy and procedures in place for the administration of medication to pupils.</li> </ul> <p><b>The school:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement.</li> <li>• Encourages staff to avail of relevant training</li> <li>• Encourages Board of Management members to avail of relevant training.</li> <li>• Maintains records of all staff and board member training (see annual checklist)</li> <li>• Has in place a Code of Behaviour for pupils</li> <li>• Has in place an Acceptable Use Policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils. This has been updated to guide and inform digital homework activities.</li> <li>• Has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones and other devices by pupils.</li> <li>• Has a Critical Incident Management Plan in place</li> <li>• Has in place procedures for the school for the use of external sports coaches.</li> <li>• Has in place a policy and clear</li> </ul>
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		<p>procedures for one to one teaching activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has in place a policy and procedures in respect of student teacher placements.</li> <li>• Has in place a policy and procedures in respect of all students undertaking work experience in the school.</li> </ul> <p><b>Intimate Care Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's Intimate Care Policy was reviewed and updated by LO'M in consultation with the relevant partners and was ratified by the Board of Management on 21/03/2023.</li> <li>• Intimate Care record keeping procedures have also been revised and implemented since March 2023.</li> </ul> <p><b>Trauma Informed Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff have engaged in Trauma Informed Practice training in Terms 2 &amp; 3 of 2023.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supervision Procedures</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have maintained many of the supervision procedures that were part of our Covid Safety Plan. This enhanced supervision has continued to provide the children with a greater sense of wellbeing and security.</li> <li>2. Members of the school staff maintain a visible presence at the school gates and designated locations throughout the school and school grounds during collection and drop -off times.</li> <li>3. There is supervision for the children</li> </ol>
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		<p>from their time of arrival at 8.30 a.m. daily (fifteen minutes before official opening time).</p> <p>4. The number of classes playing together in outside areas has been reduced. This has reduced the amount of conflict between pupils and the number of accidents and has created a safer, happier environment.</p> <p><b>In light 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 following policies were updated:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Code of Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy was reviewed in January 2023 and will continue to be reviewed annually.</li> <li>2. The Critical Incident Policy was updated in Term 3 of 2023.</li> </ol> <p><b>Child Protection Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff engaged with annual Child Protection training on 07/11/2023 Túsla Mandated Persons e-Learning Module.</li> </ul> <p><b>Staff Feedback re: CSS and Risk Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff feedback was requested at a staff</li> </ul>
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		<p>meeting on 07/11/2023.</p> <p><b>Pupil Feedback re: CSS and Risk Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the findings of the pupils' survey carried out in 2023, the Students' Council met with FA (AP2) to discuss the findings. Some of their practical suggestions will be implemented in Terms 2 &amp; 3.</li> </ul>
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**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.

**Examples of activities, risks and procedures**

The examples listed in this document are provided to assist schools in undertaking their risk assessment under the Children First Act, 2015. Schools should note that this list of examples is not intended to be exhaustive. It is the responsibility of each school to ensure, as far as possible, that any other risks and procedures that are relevant to its own particular circumstances are identified and specified in the written risk assessment and that adequate procedures are in place to address all risks identified.

It is acknowledged that schools already have in place a range of policies, practices and procedures to mitigate the risk of harm to children while they are participating in the activities of the school and that some school activities will carry low or minimal risks of harm compared to others. In the context of the risk assessment that must be undertaken by schools, the Children First Act, 2015 refers to risk as "any potential for harm". Therefore, it is important that, as part of its risk assessment process, each school lists and reviews all of its various activities (which shall include identifying those that may carry low risk of harm as well as those that carry higher risks of harm). Doing so will help the school to (1) identify, as required under the Children First Act, 2015, any risks of harm that may exist in respect of the school's activities, (2) identify and assess the adequacy of the various procedures already in place to manage those risks of harm and (3) identify and put in place any such additional procedures as are considered necessary to manage any risk identified.

The Addendum to Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children published in January 2019 clarifies that organisations providing relevant services to children should consider the specific issue of online safety when carrying out their risk assessment and preparing their Child Safeguarding Statement.

The Guidance on Continuity of Schooling for primary and post-primary schools (April 2020) advises of the importance of teachers maintaining the safe and ethical use of the internet during distance learning and assisting parents and guardians to be aware of their role also. Schools should ensure that their Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) informs and guides remote or distance learning activity.

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)*.

### **Examples of School Activities**

- Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one teaching
- One-to-one learning support
- One-to-one counselling
- Outdoor teaching activities
- Online teaching and learning remotely
- 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 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
- Management of provision of food and drink
- Administration of Medicine
- Administration of First Aid
- Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe
- 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 other extra-curricular activities
- Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/ needs such as
  - Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants
  - Members of the Traveller community
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children
  - Pupils perceived to be LGBT
  - Pupils of minority religious faiths
  - Children in care
  - Children on Tusla's Child Protection Notification System (CPNS)
  - Children with medical needs
- Recruitment of school personnel including -
  - Teachers/SNAs
  - 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/religious instruction external to the school
- Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school, including social media
- 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
- Breakfast club
- Homework club/evening study

### **Examples of Risks of Harm**

- 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 racism
- 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, including medical 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 an inappropriate 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

### **Examples of Procedures to address risks of harm**

- All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school's *Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment*
- 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* and its Addendum (2019)
- The school implements in full the Stay Safe Programme
- 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 undertakes anti-racism awareness initiatives
- The school has a yard/playground supervision policy to ensure appropriate supervision of children during, assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc.
- 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 DE circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting
- The school has a codes of conduct for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff)
- The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
- The school has a Special Educational Needs policy
- The school has an intimate care policy/plan in respect of students who require such care
- 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 a policy governing the use of smart phones and tables devices in the school by pupils as per circular 38/2018
- The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan
- The school has in place a Home School Liaison policy and related procedures
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the use of external sports coaches
- The school has in place a policy and clear procedures for one-to-one teaching activities
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for one-to-one counselling
- The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of student teacher placements
- The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of students undertaking work experience in the school
- The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of pupils of the school undertaking work experience in external organisations