

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment for the Ursuline Boarding School



Child Safeguarding Statement

Ursuline Boarding School is associated with a recognised 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), the Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023, Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, and the National Board Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCI) Standards, the Board of Directors of Ursuline Boarding School has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

- 1 The Board of Directors of the Ursuline Boarding School has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement
- 2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Rachel Hennessy**
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Sr. Berchmans Whelan**
- 4 The Relevant Person is **Rachel Hennessy**
- 5 The Board of Directors of the Ursuline Boarding School recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school and boarding school life and must be reflected in all of the school's management authority's policies, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the board of management/management authority will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The Board of Directors 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 and care of their children; and
 - fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
- 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/boarding facility, the Board of Directors adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*, the relevant procedures set out in the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school/boarding facility staff which are published on the gov.ie.

- In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, the Board of Directors 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 gov.ie.
 - 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 board of directors-
 - Has provided each member of staff with a copy of the Boarding School Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the Boarding School Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Requires staff to avail of relevant training
 - Requires Board of Director members to avail of relevant training
 - The Board of Directors maintains records of all staff and board member training
 - In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all Boarding School personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* including, in the case of registered teachers and any boarding facility staff who are mandated persons, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.
 - There is a procedure in place for maintaining a list of mandated persons. All staff employed by the Board of Directors 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 of Directors has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the Boarding School or participating in Boarding School activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the Boarding School 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 website, gov.ie or will be made available on request by the Boarding School.
- 7 This statement has been published on the schools website and has been provided to all members of Boarding School personnel 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 Directors on 25/09/2023

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Directors on 13/10/2023

Signed: *Da Beanchmas Nolan*
Chairperson of Board of Directors

Signed: *Rachel Denny*
Head of Boarding

Date: 01/12/23

Date: 1/12/23

For information in respect of how the child safeguarding statement was developed or to request a copy of the statement, please contact the relevant person noted at the beginning of this child safeguarding statement

Phone: 0504 – 21340

or email: headofboarding@uct.ie

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of Ursuline Boarding School

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirements of Chapter 8 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Ursuline Boarding School.

1. List of Boarding School activities

- Provision of Residential facilities for boarders
- Morning wakeup call
- Breakfast
- Study Hall
- Chapel – Morning Prayer
- Lunchtime and Supper, queuing for food and eating in the Ref, management and provision of food and drink
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- Sporting activities
- Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in boarding school
- Administration of Medicine
- Administration of First Aid
- Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils
- Training of boarding facility personnel in child protection matters
- Recruitment of school personnel, including supervisors, ancillary staff, visitors/contractors, present in school during school hours
- One to one and group pastoral care meetings
- Prevention of dealing with intimidation and bullying amongst pupils
- Volunteers/ Parents in Boarding School visits/ activities
- Visitors/ contractors present in Boarding School at any time
- Evening Study in assigned halls
- Online Teaching/ Grinds
- Arrival and departure for weekend and holidays
- Use of video/photography/other media to record school events
- Homework Club in the Boarding School
- Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in in Boarding School
- Applications of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour, including detention of pupils, confiscation of phones etc.

2. The Boarding 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 Boarding school personnel
- Risk of child being harmed in the boarding school by a member of Boarding School personnel
- Risk of child being harmed in the Boarding School by another child in the Boarding School
- Risk of child being harmed in the Boarding School by volunteer or visitor to the school/boarding facility
- Risk of child being harmed by a member of Boarding School personnel, a member of staff of another organisation or other person while child participating in out of school activities e.g. swimming lessons
- Risk of harm from an intruder

- Risk of kidnap
- Risk of child being harmed by a member of the public that enters the Boarding School grounds
- Risk of harm due to inadequate protection from Boarding School Policies
- Risk of harm in one-to-one medical situation
- Risk of harm due to bullying of child
- Risk of harm due to racism
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children in the Boarding 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 in the Boarding School
- Risk of harm due to children inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones and other devices while in the Boarding School.
- Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching or counselling while in the Boarding School
- Risk of harm caused by member of school/boarding facility personnel communicating with pupils in an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner.
- Risk of harm caused by member of Boarding school personnel accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner.
- Risks associated with online learning/ Grinds
- Risk of harm to students who leave student grounds
- Risk that new technology, specifically smartphones may be used inappropriately

The Boarding School has identified specific risk of harm in respect to living away from home, student participation, substances and inappropriate behavior:

Living Away from Home:

- Risk associated with students residing away from parents and family in Boarding Facility accommodations. This includes:
 - Risk of communication break down between student and home
 - Risk of individual needs not being met in a communal living environment
 - Risk of homesickness in students
- Risk associated with younger students being in unsupervised company of older boarders
- Risks associated with peer pressure to join any group that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional/ and or physical harm
- Risk of failure to provide an adequate induction program for new boarders where they are provided with relevant information and where clear expectations are outlined.
- Risk of failure to train mentors or student leaders within the Boarding School
- Risk of harm in dormitory and common areas
- Risk of harm to students going to homes of day school students during the week

Student Participation:

- Risk of students failing to access support to discuss their experience of being away from home during times of emotional vulnerability
- Risk of failing to include student voice in the development of procedures and process for boarders

Substances:

- Risk of self administration of medication
- Risk of students gaining access to alcohol or illegal or harmful substances while they are away from home

Inappropriate Behaviour:

- Risk of inappropriate behaviour associated with young people as they go through adolescence and beyond

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

- All Boarding 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)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* are made available to all Boarding School personnel
- Boarding School personnel are required to adhere to the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the *Children First Act 2015* and its Addendum (2019)
- The Boarding 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 child Safeguarding Statement is displayed with the names of the DLP and DDLP in the front hall and throughout the boarding house
- Students of the Boarding School have full access to the SPHE curriculum and Wellbeing Program at the Secondary School.
- The Boarding School has a supervisor roster to ensure appropriate supervision of children during all activities
- The Boarding School has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan
- Erect signs for areas of identified risk "Private Property – No unauthorised access"
- Boarders are supervised by trained and experienced boarding practitioners who are aware of and can cater for, the additional needs of students living away from home. They act in 'loco parentis' for the students while they are living in the Boarding School.
- The Boarding House is divided into two distinct sections significantly reducing the level of contact older boarders have with younger students
- The Boarding House team provide feedback to parents to ensure students are successfully settled. Any discipline issues are dealt with according to the Code of Behaviours.
- Student Council members receive training during meetings with the Head of Boarding throughout the year
- Roll calls are taken in first and second study in the evening.
- All entrances to the building are checked and secured each night
- A pastoral care support network is in place with all staff available to assist with a student struggling during a period of emotional vulnerability
- The Boarding School has a sports grounds and recreation halls supervision of children during all recreation times and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc.
- The School has a health and safety policy.
- The Boarding School adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation re recruitment. The Boarding School has a code of conduct for Boarding School personnel.
- The Boarding School has in place a policy and procedures for the administration of medication and First Aid to pupils.
- The Boarding School has in place a code of behaviour for pupils.
- The Boarding School has in place an ICT policy in respect of usage of ICT by Students.
- The Boarding School has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by pupils.
- The Boarding School has in place a policy and clear procedures for one-to-one teaching activities.
- The Boarding School has in place a policy and procedures for one-to-one counselling.
- The student council are given the opportunity to review the safeguarding risk assessment and contribute their thoughts and ideas to it
- The Ursuline Secondary School and its Board of Management are given the opportunity to review the safeguarding risk assessment and contribute their thoughts and ideas to it

- The Boarding School –
 - Has provided each member of Boarding School Staff with a copy of the Boarding School's Child Safeguarding Statement.
 - Requires all new staff is provided with a copy of the Boarding School's Child Safeguarding Statement.
 - Requires Boarding School staff to avail of relevant training
 - Maintains records of all Boarding School staff training.

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 Directors has endeavoured to identify as far as possible the risks of harm that are relevant to this school/boarding facility 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/boarding facility has in place the procedures listed in this risk assessment to manage and reduce risk to the greatest possible extent.