



## **Child Safeguarding Statement**

### **Section 1: Name and Location of Service Being Provided**

Sutton Park School, St Fintan's Road, Sutton, Co. Dublin.

### **Section 2: Nature of Service and Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm**

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (2017) and TUSLA guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding statements, the Board of Management of Sutton Park School has ratified the Child Safeguarding Statement as set out herein. The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification, the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (2017), as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement.

#### **Nature of Service**

Sutton Park School is a multi-denominational, co-educational primary and post-primary school providing primary and post-primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Year.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is

Ronan Walsh

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is

Deirdre Mullen

#### **Principles**

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 them open to accusations of abuse or neglect
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters [*The Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 do not prevent the sharing of information on a reasonable and proportionate basis for the purposes of Child Protection and where there may be a conflict between confidentiality and the safety and welfare of the child, the latter will always be the primary consideration.*]
- ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation and socio-economic background, all children shall have a positive and enjoyable learning experience in a safe and child centred environment. Sutton Park School acknowledges that young children, disabled children, LGBT children and those from ethnic minority communities can be particularly vulnerable to harm\* and we accept responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

According to the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (2017), a 'child' is defined as 'anyone who is under 18 years of age excluding a person who is or who has been married'. However, the school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

### **Section 3 - Risk assessment:**

The Board of Management of Sutton Park School has carried out an assessment of any potential for risk of harm\* to a child while in our care.



**\*Important Note: It should be understood 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 (2017)*.**

The phrase ‘school personnel’ used in this risk assessment is a generic term to encompass all adults involved in the operation of this school. It covers all employees and voluntary workers, and includes Parent Teacher Association members when they are working in the school.

	<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure(s) in Place to Manage Risk Identified</b>
1.	(New) School Personnel Not Vetted	Safe recruitment procedures are in place, the school adheres to the requirements of Garda Vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda Vetting and a vetting disclosure is obtained for all (new) school personnel.
2.	Parents Not Vetted for Volunteering in the School	All parents (in particular Board and PTA members) involved in any capacity in the operation of this school are required to be Garda vetted in order to volunteer for any school activity such as themed weeks, cake sales, school trips and sporting activities etc.
3.	(New) School Personnel Unaware of or Unfamiliar with Procedures and Policies Relevant to Child Protection and Welfare	All school personnel are made aware of policies and procedures (in particular the Child Safeguarding Statement, Health and Safety Policy, Substance Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Guidance Plan, Learning Resource Plan and Code of Conduct) and receive training on the Children First Act 2015 and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 through TUSLA’s Universal e-Learning Programme, the Staff Handbook and at whole school staff meetings at the beginning of each academic year. All school personnel will be made aware that the Designated Liaison Person is the Head of School and of his role. School personnel will also be made aware of who the deputy Designated Liaison Person is and of her role.



4.	Inadequate Supervision of Pupils in School during Class or Break Times, Assemblies, Dismissal, Homework Club or Evening Study and in Specific Areas	Pupils are carefully supervised at all times throughout the school premises and grounds by teaching staff. A supervision roster is drawn up each term and substitution / cover in the event of teacher absences is monitored and managed daily and weekly by the school principals. All study slots are supervised by qualified staff.
5.	Pupils, Parents and/or School Personnel Unaware of Code of Conduct Procedures	All members of the school community are made aware of the Code of Conduct which outlines the procedures to follow if there is an issue within the school. This Code is available on the school website and in the Parent & Student and Staff handbooks.
6.	Bullying	An Anti-Bullying policy is in place and adhered to by pupils, staff and parents. Pupils and parents / guardians co-sign the Anti-Bullying Code in their journals at the start of each academic year.
7.	Dignity and Respect at Work	All school personnel are aware that relations with colleagues should be at all times professional and courteous and that all school personnel should model respectful interactions for the benefit of both adults and children.
8.	Off-Site Trips and Outings and Trips Involving Overnight Stays and / or Foreign Travel	Staff will ensure appropriate checks are conducted into all aspects of off- site trips. Staff will confirm that sleeping arrangements can accommodate children in proximity to supervising staff. Staff will ensure that there is provision for separate sleeping quarters for male and female pupils. Staff will ensure that all transport used is compliant with statutory requirements. Staff will ensure that any accompanying adults are Garda vetted.
9.	Visitors & Contractors	All visitors and contractors entering the school are required to sign in at reception and, for the purposes of infection prevention and control, are required to complete a 'Visitor & Contractor COVID-19 Declaration' form and a 'Contact Log' form. All visits to the school are by prior appointment only and access to school buildings is not permitted without same.



10	Guest Speakers	The school has in place procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum. Guest speakers are required to register as visitors at reception on arrival and when they are addressing pupils, there will always be a member of staff present.
11.	School Transport Arrangements	All transport used complies with all statutory safety regulations. Where seat belts are available, responsibility rests with individual students to wear such belts. All transport is sourced and co-ordinated centrally through the school's business office using trusted service providers. Whether transport is provided by private bus companies or by Dublin Bus (through third party providers), the school seeks written confirmation that all bus drivers have been Garda vetted.
12.	Unacceptable or Inappropriate ICT Usage between Pupils or between Pupils and School Personnel	All school personnel and pupils must adhere to the principles outlined in the school's ICT Acceptable Use policy which is available on the school's website and in the Parent & Student and Staff handbooks. Pupils and parents / guardians must on admission read and co-sign the ICT acceptable usage agreement, a copy of which is retained on each pupil's school record.
13.	Swimming Lessons	Changing room arrangements at the facility must allow for supervision of children by teachers whilst also allowing absolute privacy for each child. Teachers oversee swimming lessons ensuring that instructors engage with the children in an appropriate manner.
14.	Intruder(s) on School Premises	The management of the school has procedures in place to ensure the protection and welfare of children in such circumstances. Drills for such eventualities are conducted on an annual basis. The school has in place a Critical Incident Plan.
15.	Pupils with SEN and/or Special Vulnerabilities	The school has a comprehensive Special Educational Needs policy and procedures. IEPs are drafted and stored centrally and communicated to all relevant school personnel to ensure continuity of care. The Student Care Team, SNAs and Learning Resource staff closely monitor the pastoral needs of such students and promptly address concerns and issues as they arise.
16.	One-to-One Teaching, Activities, Counselling	The school has clear procedures for one-to-one teaching, activities and counselling and, in particular, ensures that all one-to-one rooms have visibility for both student



		and teacher / counsellor via windows installed in doors or open door policy and practice – this is for the protection of both student and teacher.
17.	Student Teacher Placements	The school has in place procedures in respect of student teacher placements. Student teachers will be under the guidance of a mentor and are Garda vetted.
18.	Pupils Undertaking Work Experience in the School or in External Organisations	The school has in place procedures in respect of the safeguarding of pupils of the school undertaking work experience in the school or in external organisations. A Parental Waiver will also be supplied.
19.	Inadequate Administration of Medication or First Aid to Pupils	The school has in place policies and procedures on Medications and Health & Safety. A significant number of school personnel have participated in First Aid and Cardiac First Response training (to PHECC / national standard) and all first aid (medication) supplies and equipment are regularly reviewed, replenished and updated.
20.	Lack of Awareness on the Part of Pupils of the Risks of ‘Harm’	The junior school implements in full the Stay Safe Programme. The senior school implements in full the Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) programme and the Wellbeing Programme (SPHE, CSPE & PE) at Junior Cycle and the RSE Programme at Senior Cycle. Students are reminded on an annual basis of the content of the Anti-Bullying Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Substance Safety Policy and Code of Conduct.
21.	Participation by Pupils in Religious Ceremonies / Religious Instruction External to the School	All students participating in external religious ceremonies are always accompanied by a member of the Sutton Park School staff.
22.	Use of Video / Photography / Other Media to Record, Host, Stream, Broadcast School Events	Recording of school events is done only with prior consent and the Acceptable Usage Policy is applied in all cases.



23.	Use of School Premises by Other Organisations during the Day or After School	All external agencies are Garda vetted in cases where they interact with our students. All other agencies are fully insured and do not interact with our students.
24.	Use of Toilet / Changing / Shower Areas in the School	All activity in these areas is monitored where possible allowing for privacy of students.
25.	Extended period(s) of online learning due to COVID-19 and implications for duty of care, reasonable grounds for concern and reporting	See provisions as set out in Addendum #1: Child Protection & COVID-19.

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 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020. It shall be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Signed

Dated 17.11.20

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed

Dated 17.11.20

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management



## **Section 4 - Procedures:**

In addition to the procedures detailed in the risk assessment above, the following procedures support Sutton Park School's duty of care to safeguard children while they are attending the school:

1. **Procedures in respect of any member of school personnel who is the subject of any investigation in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child in the school:**

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 PostPrimary Schools 2017 and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the DES website.

2. **Procedures for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work in the school**

*The Board of Management aims to:*

- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- maintain a safe recruitment and vetting policy
- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our students

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 DES and available on the DES website. Furthermore, the Board of Management will undertake the following measures:

- New staff members and volunteers are required to obtain vetting disclosures through the school
- References are sought from previous employers or institutions of study



- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation and continually updated.

3. **Procedures for the provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information by school personnel, including the identification of the occurrence of harm**

In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to school personnel 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
- Requires all school personnel to avail of relevant training
- Provides additional Child Protection training for staff (in particular for management, DLP, DDLP), facilitated by the PDST
- The Board of Management maintains records of all staff and Board member training
- Revisit relevant policies and procedures regularly at staff meetings and Board of Management meetings

4. **Procedure for reporting to TUSLA by the Board of Management or a member of staff (whether a mandated person or otherwise) in accordance with the Children First Act, 2015 or the guidelines issued by the Minister under section 6 of the Act (i.e. Children First National Guidance 2017)**

*The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on teachers registered with the Teaching Council (referred to as 'Mandated Persons'), to report child protection concerns at or above a defined 'threshold of harm' to TUSLA – Child and Family Agency. These mandated persons must also assist TUSLA, on request, in its assessment of child protection concerns about children who have been the subject of a mandated report.*

All school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.

1. School personnel should in the first instance and without delay seek advice and guidance from the DLP (Head of School), if they have a concern regarding Child Protection and Welfare



## 2. **Mandated Concern**

Where the level of concern is at or above the defined 'threshold of harm', this will necessitate a 'mandated report'.

The 'threshold of harm' is defined as 'assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare'. If the level of concern is at or above this threshold, the mandated person must submit (jointly with the DLP) a mandated report.

## 3. **Reasonable Grounds for Concern** include:

- Evidence (e.g. injury or behaviour) that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
  - Any concern about possible sexual abuse
  - Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
  - A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
  - Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
  - An account from a person who saw the child being abused
4. Where the DLP and registered teacher / mandated person (or other non-mandated member of school personnel reporting a concern) are satisfied that the threshold of harm has not been breached, but agree that there are reasonable grounds for concern, the DLP has responsibility to without delay report the concern to Tusla. In such cases (i.e. where the registered teacher is satisfied that the concern is not at or above the defined threshold of harm for a mandated report) the teacher is not required to submit a report to Tusla.
5. In the event that the concern is in relation to the Designated Liaison Person, the concern should be reported to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
6. In the event of the absence of the DLP, the Deputy Designated Liaison Person should be involved.



7. The DLP / DDLP / Chairperson may then report to or consult with TUSLA to initiate an appropriate response pathway.
8. Where contact with TUSLA cannot be established and if it is deemed that there is an immediate risk to the safety and welfare of the child concerned, the DLP should contact the Gardaí.
9. In the event that the DLP determines that a report to TUSLA is not necessary, the DLP/DDLP must advise the member of staff in writing, detailing his/her reasons for not doing so. Should the staff member not be satisfied with the DLP/DDLP's decision not to report, and have reasonable grounds for concern for the safety and welfare of the child, the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 enables the staff member to make a separate report to TUSLA 'reasonably and in good faith' and he/she has the right to do so. The staff member will not be penalised for taking such action notwithstanding any previous decisions to the contrary by the DLP/DDLP.
10. The DLP / DDLP is not obliged to advise parents / caregivers prior to making a report if it is deemed that so doing may further endanger the child or the person making the report, or if so doing would compromise the Child and Family Agency's ability to carry out a risk assessment.
11. The DLP will ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents / reasonable grounds for concern and provide support and advice to the individuals who raise or disclose the concern.
12. The DLP will ensure the confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.

##### **5. Procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons in the school**

All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015. A list of mandated persons employed by the school will be maintained and updated by the Head of School.



## **6. Procedure for appointing the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), as the first point of contact in respect of the schools' Child Safeguarding Statement**

The Board of Management has appointed the above named DLP (Mr. Ronan Walsh) as the “relevant person” (as defined in the Children First Act 2015). The DLP will be the first point of contact for the school when dealing with TUSLA – Child and Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and other parties in connections with allegations of and/or concerns about Child Protection and Welfare.

### **Section 5 - Implementation**

The Board of Management recognises that implementation of the Child Safeguarding Statement is an ongoing process. Sutton Park School is committed to the implementation of this Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while attending our school.

This statement has been published on the school’s website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parent Teacher Association 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 of Education and Skills if requested.

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 ratified by the Board of Management on 16 November 2020.

**Chairperson of Board of Management**

**Date: 17.11.20**

**Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management**

**Date: 17.11.20**