

Child Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices



Information Booklet For all personnel in school

2024 - 2025

St. Anthony's School

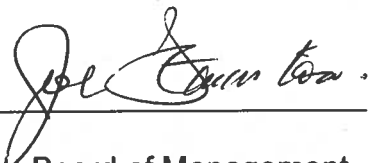
Humbert Way, Castlebar

Roll No: 19248R

To: **Patron, Western Care and Parents**

The Board of Management of St Anthony's School wishes to inform you that –

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement was completed at the Board meeting of 22/01/2024
- This review was conducted in accordance with the "Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement" published on the Department's website

Signed 

Date 22/01/2024.

Chairperson Board of Management

Signed 

Date 22/1/2024

Acting Principal Secretary to the Board of Management

St. Anthony's School Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Child Safeguarding Statement 2024 (as per revised DES mandatory template 2021)

St. Anthony's Special School is a special school providing primary/post-primary education to pupils with Mild Intellectual Disabilities from 4 to 18 years of age.

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 2017](#) and [Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements](#), the Board of Management of St. Anthony's School 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 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement
- 2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mrs. Anna Sweeney
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Mrs. Helena Brady
- 4 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.

- 5 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 2017 and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the DE 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](#) 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 DE 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 2017, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.

- In this school the Board has appointed the abovenamed DLP as the "relevant person" (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the schools child safeguarding statement.

- 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 DE 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.


- 6 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.

- 7 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 22 January 2024

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on 22 January 2024.

Signed: 
 Chairperson of Board of Management
 Date: 22/01/2024.

Signed: 
 Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management
 Date: 22/1/2024

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of St. Anthony's Special School as per DES mandatory template.

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 2017*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of St. Anthony's Special School.

1. List of school activities

- Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one teaching
- One-to-one therapy work with external personnel and school personnel
- Outdoor teaching activities
- Sporting Activities
- School outings
- Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in schools
- 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
- 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 CPNS
- Recruitment of school personnel including -
- Teachers/SNA's
- 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 e.g. retreats
- Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school
- Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour including Time Out of pupils, confiscation of phones etc.
- Students from external bodies 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
- Distance Learning (Remote Learning) while school is closed for exceptional reasons (Covid-19 Virus) and online or virtual contact between staff and children

- Emailing between staff, pupils, parents and home environments

2. The 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 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 bullying of child
- 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
- 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 appropriate 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
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children on I.E.Ds (Internet Enabled Devices) for accessing school work.
- Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching, phone call, counselling or coaching situation

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

- All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school's *Child Safeguarding Statement*
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* are made available to all school personnel
- School Personnel are required to adhere to the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the *Children First Act 2015*
- The school implements in full the Stay Safe Programme
- The school implements in full the SPHE curriculum
- The school implements in full the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle
- 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 has yard/playground supervision procedures 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 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 DES circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting
- The school has a code of conduct for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff)
- The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff and non-teaching staff
- 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*

- o Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
- o Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
- o Encourages board of management members to avail of relevant training
- o 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 in place an ICT AUP policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils
- The school has in place a mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by pupils
- The school has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan
- The school has in place procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum
- The school has in place procedures for the use of external sports coaches
- The school has in place clear procedures for one-to-one teaching activities
- The school has in place procedures for one-to-one therapy work with students
- The school has in place procedures in respect of student teacher placements
- The school has in place procedures in respect of students undertaking work experience in the school
- The school has in place procedures in respect of pupils of the school undertaking work experience in external organisations
- The school complies with GDPR protection of contacts of the school community
- The school has Official Staff Emails and agreed platform to be used to convey school information, planning and resources between teachers.
- Email Etiquette Policy between staff – to be reviewed
- The school uses Website and Textparent to communicate with parents and pupils.
- Teachers will endeavour to pre-check and use only reputable websites for assigned work.
- The school follows DES Guidance on Distance Learning
- The school follows HSE Guidelines on Social Distancing
- Acceptable Use Policy-The school has an AUP which also covers online platforms that may be used for distance learning
- As per school policy, Staff personal phone numbers are blocked for contacting any pupils. Staff are not permitted to give own phone numbers or personal contact details to parents or pupils.
- During any school closure, such as happened with COVID-19, pupils will use their school or parents' email account to contact their class teacher by email. The school email accounts are as follows: use the class teachers full name with the school webmail address for example: teachersname@stanthonymayo.ie
- Or contact can be made with the principal anytime at principalbyrnes@stanthonymayo.ie

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 2017*

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.

St Anthony's School Policies & Procedures

Child safeguarding in St. Anthony's School:

General Organisational Implications for School Staff

Supervision

School supervision policy and routines will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks and transitional periods.

Behaviour

Children will be encouraged to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Discipline. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond appropriately.

Visibility

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school yards. Children are not allowed to leave school grounds or to engage with adults who are outside of the school yard. Children will not be left in classrooms or toilets without adult awareness/supervision.

Visitors

All visitors must report to reception area and must record their entry to the school by way of a signing in/out register. Visitors are usually accompanied and supervised in the discharge of their business. Other professionals who work and interact with pupils liaise with class teachers and parents so that all are knowledgeable about specific work practices.

Swimming

Children take the school bus to the pool. All adults assisting with supervision in the changing areas are acting "in loco parentis" and as such will act as prudent parents helping children with changing and returning to school as dry as possible.

Children travelling in cars/on school buses

Teachers have the use of the school buses to transport pupils to and from activities. The bus will have the driver and at least one other adult to supervise pupils without distracting the driver. Children under the age of 11 or shorter than 150cm must use the booster seats provided. The Principal, Deputy Principal and Secretary may carry pupils in their cars if it is unavoidable, but it is advisable that at least two children must travel with the person in the car or another adult and child. Insurance to do so is the responsibility of the care owner/driver but "staff who use their motor vehicle occasionally (once a month or less) are covered under the Occasional Business Use Policy" of the school's insurance policy.

St. Anthony's School Policies & Procedures

Induction of Teachers, Ancillary Staff and others

The DLP or DDLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and staff members of this policy and the Children First Guidelines.

Dealing with children on a one-to-one basis

When staff have to work/teach/communicate/deal with children on a one to one basis it is recommended to inform another staff/adult and work in an area that may be private but not secluded i.e. there is an observation window or leave the room door open if possible. A system of transparency where staff and parents know how actual procedures and practices work is always the safest for children.

Attendance

With regard to child protection, we will pay particular attention to trends in non-attendance. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse. COVID has affected attendance at school for some children and this will be monitored carefully.

These organisational arrangements were originally discussed at a Board of Management meeting on 10/1/2008 and agreed as best practice guidelines for the school to follow. They are reviewed annually. They were discussed and reviewed by all staff at a training day on 15th March 2018 and were agreed and approved and therefore adopted by staff as ongoing best practice. They have been updated for COVID in 2020-2021.

The Reasonable Grounds for Concern are:

Neglect

The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child's needs have been neglected, are being neglected, or are at risk of being neglected to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Emotional Abuse/Ill Treatment

The threshold of harm at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

St. Anthony's School Policies & Procedures

Physical Abuse

The threshold of harm, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being or is at risk of being assaulted and that as a result the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Sexual Abuse

If as a mandated person, you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being sexually abused, then you must report this to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015. As all sexual abuse falls within the category of seriously affecting a child's health, welfare or development, you must submit all concerns about sexual abuse as a mandated person to Tusla.

There is one exception, which deals with underage consensual sexual activity between teenagers who are between 15 and 17 years of age (See Children First Nation Guidance for the Protection and Guidance of Children P23).

How should I deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child?

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/mandated-persons/how-should-i-deal-with-a-disclosure-of-abuse-from-a-child/>

If you are dealing with children, you need to be alert to the possibility that a welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to children you come into contact with. A child needs to have someone they can trust in order to feel able to disclose abuse they may be experiencing. They need to know they will be believed and will get the help they need. Without these things, they may be vulnerable to continuing abuse.

If you receive a disclosure of harm from a child, you may feel reluctant to report this for a number of reasons. For example, the child may say that they do not want the disclosure to be reported, or you may take the view that the child is now safe and that the involvement of Tusla may not be desired by either the child or their family. However, you need to inform Tusla of all risks to children above the threshold, as the removal of a risk to one child does not necessarily mean that there are no other children at risk. The information contained in a disclosure may be critical to Tusla's assessment of risk to another child either now or in the future. *Always consult the DLP or DDLP for advice if you are unsure or want to make a report.

You should deal with disclosures of abuse sensitively and professionally. The following approach is suggested as best practice for dealing with these disclosures.

- React calmly – listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible
- Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of Children First Guidance and legislation

St Anthony's School - Roll No 19248R

CHILD PROTECTION CONTACTS:

Designated Liaison Person (DLP) – Mrs Anna Sweeney Acting Principal

Deputy DLP – Mrs Helena Brady Acting Deputy Principal

Tusla - Mayo Dedicated Contact Point

DISCUSS/REPORT A CONCERN

Contact details if you need to report a concern about a child or need to discuss a concern



Child and Family Agency,

1st Floor, Mill Lane,

Bridge Street,

Castlebar,

Mayo

094 9049137



**IF YOU HAVE A SERIOUS CONCERN AND YOU CANNOT CONTACT TUSLA YOU SHOULD
REPORT YOUR CONCERN TO THE GARDAI**

Castlebar Garda Station, The Mall, Castlebar F23 KC58 - Telephone +353 94 9038200