



Tel: 2853775  
Mob: 086 0451135

# Our Lady of Good Counsel Girls' School

Johnstown, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

email: [office@johnstowngns.ie](mailto:office@johnstowngns.ie)

[www.johnstowngns.com](http://www.johnstowngns.com)

## **CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

**OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL  
GIRLS' SCHOOL**

**JOHNSTOWN**

**DUN LAOGHAIRE.**

**September 2024**



## Child Safeguarding Statement

Our lady of Good Counsel is a primary school providing primary/post-primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

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 Lisa Breen
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Julie Cluskey
- 4 The Relevant Person is Lisa Breen  
*(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. This person can also be the DLP)*
- 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 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 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 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 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2022

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2024.

Signed: *McKeoughan*

Chairperson of Board of Management  
Management

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> Sept '24.

Signed: *Lisa Breen*

Principal/Secretary to the Board of

Date: 9/9/24

## Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

### Written Assessment of Risk of Our Lady of Good Counsel Girls' National 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 2017*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Our Lady of Good Counsel Girls' National School.

List of school activities	The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities –	The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment
<p><b>Daily Activities</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pupils entering and leaving school grounds</li> <li>2. Wet day provision – early entrance or exit.</li> <li>3. Pupil presence in school yard in morning before school</li> <li>4. Parents or other adults entering building</li> <li>5. School doors left open</li> <li>6. Pupils going on messages around school/to BNS</li> <li>7. Exiting and entering to/from school yard at break times; exiting and entering to/from school garden</li> <li>8. Doors in the Meadow being kept closed securely/doors to mainstream school being kept closed/gates on yard being kept closed</li> <li>9. Pupils arriving and leaving school on school buses</li> <li>10. Playing on yard</li> <li>11. Risk of harm in the school car park.</li> <li>12. Rang 6 class minders/jobs girls</li> <li>13. Pupil behaviour</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risk of harm not being recognised by school personnel</li> <li>2. Risk of harm not being reported by school personnel</li> <li>3. Risk of child being harmed in school by member of school personnel</li> <li>4. Risk of child being harmed by another child</li> <li>5. Risk of child being harmed in the school by a visiting teacher, a visitor, or volunteer to the school</li> <li>6. Risk of child being harmed by a member of school personnel, a member of staff of another organisation, or other person while a child is participating in an out of school activity/school trip</li> <li>7. Risk of harm due to bullying of child</li> <li>8. Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children in school</li> <li>9. Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children while attending after school activities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child Safeguarding Statement – to be given to all school personnel, parents, visiting teachers and all visitors</li> <li>2. DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 – to be made available to all mandated persons and the BOM and made available to all other school personnel and visiting teachers.</li> <li>3. All school personnel are required to adhere to Child Protection Procedures for Primary Schools 2017 and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the Children First Act 2015 - staff training and compliance with Tusla elearning certs supplied to the office/certs displayed in the classrooms and SEN rooms.</li> <li>4. The school implements in full the Stay Safe Programme</li> <li>5. The school implements in full the SPHE curriculum</li> <li>6. The school implements a wellbeing programme - Weaving Wellbeing</li> </ol>

<p>14. Staff behaviour  15. Classroom teaching  16. SEN teaching: one-to-one  17. Classroom teaching/1 to 1 teaching- teachers and SNAs in the Meadow  18. Care of children with special educational needs  19. Use of toileting areas: outside classrooms/leaving classrooms, hall, yard for toilets  20. Toileting /intimate care/children sick (changing of clothes)  21. Sensory/movement breaks/c/classroom withdrawal/time spent in sensory room/gym  22. Managing behaviours of concern (including movement of children to keep them or others safe).  23. Applications of sanctions – Code of Behaviour/Restorative Practice  24. Application of bullying prevention, intervention and sanctions  25. Administration of medicine  26. Administration of First Aid  27. Curriculum Provision – SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe.  28. Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/needs such as  <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) children</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>▫ Children with medical needs</li> </ul> </p>	<p>10. Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communications between a child or adult  11. Risk of harm due to a child inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones and other devices in school  12. Risk of harm to pupils with SEN who have particular vulnerabilities  13. Risk of harm to child while receiving intimate care  14. Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching  15. Risk of harm caused by a member of school personnel communicating with pupils in an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner (use of personal phone)  16. Risk of harm caused by a member of school personnel accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner  17. Risk of harm caused by a member of the public to a child on school property (access through school yard)  18. Risk of harm caused by a parent in school car park/school building</p>	<p>7. The school has an Anti-Bullying policy, fully adhering to DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools. All staff required to comply with policy in these areas  8. The school has a yard supervision policy to ensure appropriate supervision of children during assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as bathrooms  9. The school has in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of school outings.  10. The school has a Health and Safety policy.  11. The school adheres to requirements of Garda Vetting legislation and relevant DES circulars in relation to recruitment  12. The school has Codes of Conduct for school personnel, teaching and non-teaching staff.  13. The school complies with agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff  14. The school has a Special Education Needs Policy  15. The school has an Intimate Care Policy/Plan in respect of students who require such care.  16. The school has in place Personal Care Plans in respect of administration of medication to pupils.  17. The school:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Has provided each member of school staff with a copy of the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement</li> <li>▫ Ensures 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</li> </ul> 18. The school has a policy and procedures for the administration of First Aid.</p>
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<p><b>29.</b> Recruitment of school personnel including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Teachers/SNA's</li> <li>▫ Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners</li> <li>▫ Sports coaches</li> <li>▫ External Tutors/Guest speakers</li> <li>▫ Volunteers/Parents in school activities</li> <li>▫ Visitors/contractors present in school during school hours</li> <li>▫ Visitors/contractors present during after school activities</li> </ul> <p><b>30.</b> Information and Communication Technology, including social media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Use of ICT by pupils in school (AUP Policy)</li> <li>▫ Use of photos, videos, phones, social media to record school events/Use of social media by parents</li> <li>▫ Use of ICT by staff in school</li> <li>▫ Use of school website/class blogs</li> <li>▫ Use of whiteboards and ipads by adults and children</li> </ul> <p><b>31.</b> School Library</p> <p><b>32.</b> School cleaners working in school</p> <p><b>33.</b> Meadow outings-independent living skills programme (school trips)</p> <p><b>34.</b> Integration to mainstream school from meadow and reverse integration/integration to BNS</p> <p><b>35.</b> Mainstream children/BNS using Meadow gym with SNA</p> <p><b>36.</b> Use of external specialist teachers, such as teachers of drama, PE, GAA, basketball, tag rugby, music generation and other teachers as appropriate.</p> <p><b>37.</b> Risk of Harm during services at the church including funerals during the school days</p>	<p><b>19.</b> The school has in place a Code of Behaviour for all pupils.</p> <p><b>20.</b> The school has in place an ICT policy in respect of usage of ICT by pupils.</p> <p><b>21.</b> The school has in place a policy in respect of usage of ICT by school personnel.</p> <p><b>22.</b> The school has in place a policy on usage of smart devices by pupils.</p> <p><b>23.</b> The school has a Critical Incident Management Plan.</p> <p><b>24.</b> The school has in place a policy in respect of School Transport.</p> <p><b>25.</b> The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DE circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting</p> <p><b>26.</b> Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour including detention of pupils, confiscation of phones etc.</p> <p><b>27.</b> 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</p> <p><b>28.</b> The school has in place a policy and procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum</p> <p><b>29.</b> The school has in place a clear policy and procedures in place in respect of Work Experience students and SNAs.</p> <p><b>30.</b> The school has a clear policy and procedures in place in respect of student teacher placement.</p> <p><b>31.</b> The school has in place a policy and procedures for the use of external sports coaches</p> <p><b>32.</b> The school has in place a policy and clear procedures for one-to-one teaching activities.</p>
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<p><b>After school activities/Extra-curricular classes including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38. Football/basketball/soccer matches</li> <li>39. School Team training</li> <li>40. Club Gaelge</li> <li>41. Dance Club</li> <li>42. Games Club</li> <li>43. Athletics Club</li> <li>44. Art and Craft Club</li> <li>45. Homework Club</li> <li>46. Early drop off club</li> </ul> <p><b>Occasional Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47. Work experience students</li> <li>48. Teaching placement student teachers</li> <li>49. SNA work placement</li> <li>50. 6 week cycling course</li> <li>51. Fundraising events involving pupils</li> <li>52. School tours/travelling to and from school matches/Transitions</li> <li>53. Special school weeks and events – Arts Week, Sport for All days, Halloween Cake Sale, Christmas Fair, Seachtain na Gaelge</li> <li>54. Recruitment (Garda vetting)</li> <li>55. Guest speakers to classes/whole school volunteers/Parent helpers</li> <li>56. Visiting groups to school</li> <li>57. Visiting contractors</li> <li>58. Sacramental ceremonies/practices in church</li> <li>59. One-to-one/ assessments (NEPS/HSE/Tusla/Other agencies)</li> <li>60. Visitors to the Meadow (including OT/SLT)</li> <li>61. Use of off-site facilities (Kilbogget Park, church, school surroundings)</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 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.

### **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)*.