

# Holy Family Senior School

Ennis, Co Clare

## Child Safeguarding Statement

March, 2018

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Acting Principal: Hugh Connolly

Acting Deputy Principal: Antoinette Loftus

**Acting Designated Liaison Person: (DLP)**

Hugh Connolly, Acting Principal.

**Acting Deputy Liaison Person: (DLP)**

Antoinette Loftus, Acting Deputy Principal

# Child Safeguarding Statement

Holy Family Senior School is a primary school providing primary education to pupils from Second Class to Sixth Class. The staff, parents and Board of Management of Holy Family Senior School have developed and agreed this Child Safeguarding Statement in line with:

- Children First Act 2015
  - Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
  - Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017
  - Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements
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 Acting Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Hugh Connolly**
  3. The Acting Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Antoinette Loftus**
  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. Types of Abuse

The 'Children First Guidelines', defines child abuse into four different types:

- neglect,
- emotional abuse,
- physical abuse,
- sexual abuse.

A child may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any time.

### 5.1 Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, medical care or attachment to and affection from adults. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that their well-being and/or development are severely affected or at risk of being severely affected.

### 5.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally found in the relationship between a care-giver (an adult person who has responsibility for a child in the short or long term) and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. Children show signs of emotional abuse by their behaviour (for example excessive clinginess to or avoidance of the parent or carer), their emotional state (low self-esteem, unhappiness) or their development. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and parent or carer.

### 5.3 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or any injury that results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples of physical injury include:

- shaking
- use of excessive force in handling
- deliberate poisoning
- suffocation
- Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy (where parents make up stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness), or
- allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

## **5.4 Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for their gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

Examples of sexual abuse include:

- exposing sexual organs or intentionally performing any sexual act in the presence of a child
- intentional touching or molesting the body of a child, by a person or object, for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- masturbating in the presence of a child or involving the child in the act of masturbation
- engaging in sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- sexually exploiting a child, or
- consensual sexual activity between an adult and a child under 17 years
- exposure to inappropriate sexual content through use of technology or other media

(In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years).

### **5.4.1 Aggressive/Bullying/Sexualised Behaviour**

As outlined in our Anti-Bullying Policy (2017), bullying is not a category in itself, however, it is important to be aware of it in relation to child abuse. Bullying can be defined as repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It includes behaviour such as teasing, taunting, threatening and hitting.

Bullying behaviour that is perpetrated by an adult against a child will be dealt with under the provisions of this policy.

Sexualised behaviour displayed by an individual child, or occurring between children is inappropriate. Should such behaviour occur within school:

- Meetings will be arranged with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child/children involved.
- Will if deemed appropriate seek advice from the HSE.

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the child protection procedures will be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser; that is, the matter will be considered a childcare and protection issue for both children.

## 6. Procedures

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 DES 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 DES and available on the DES 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 Secretary of 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 Chapter 5 of 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 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, 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 attached as an appendix to these procedures.
  - The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school's website, the DES website or will be made available on request by the school.
7. This statement will be published on the school's website and will be given to all members of school personnel, the Parents' Association and the patron. It will be 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 \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_