



Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment November 2024

Child Safeguarding Statement

Abalta Special School is a primary/special/post-primary school providing primary/post-primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class/First Year to Leaving Certificate Year (delete as appropriate).

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 Maura Madden principal
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Laura Delaney Deputy principal
- 4 The Relevant Person is Maura Madden
(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. In a school setting the relevant person shall be the designated liaison person.)
- 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 7/11/24 [date].

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on ___ [most recent review date].

Signed: Mary Murray
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 18th Nov. 2024

Signed: Maura Fladder
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 18/11/24

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of Abalta Special 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)*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Abalta Special School.

1. List of school activities

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| <p>I. Intimate care – high risk</p> <p>II. Swimming – high risk</p> <p>III. Outdoor teaching activities: Work experience, trips to cafes etc. – high risk</p> <p>IV. One-to-one teaching – medium risk</p> <p>V. Administration of medication – high risk</p> <p>VI. Recreation breaks for pupils – high risk</p> <p>VII. Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils including alighting and disembarking off school Buses- high risk</p> <p>VIII. Hygiene routines - medium risk</p> <p>IX. Daily living skills – low risk</p> <p>X. School outings – high risk</p> <p>XI. Incidents of challenging behaviour – high risk</p> <p>XII. School bus transport – high risk</p> <p>XIII. Teaching and care of vulnerable adults – high risk</p> <p>XIV. Administration of first aid – medium risk</p> <p>XV. Curricular provision of SPHE, RSE, Say Safe – medium risk</p> <p>XVI. Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils – low risk</p> <p>XVII. Training of school personnel in child protection matters – high risk</p> <p>XVIII. Recruitment of school personnel (new staff, students teachers, July) – high risk</p> <p>XIX. Use of Information and Communication Technology in the school – low risk</p> <p>XX. Application of sanctions under the school’s code of behaviour policy – high risk</p> <p>XXI. Children in care – high risk</p> <p>XXII. Use of video/photography/other media to record school events – high risk</p> |
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2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities -

- I. **Intimate care** harm by school personnel
- II. **Swimming:** harm by school personnel, harm by other pupils, harm by Abalta pupils to other pupils, absconding, changing, reluctance to get into the pool
- III. **Outdoor teaching activities:** Work experience: travelling to work experience, on-site supervision, activities of daily living, community living skills
- IV. **One-to-one teaching:** harm by school personnel when working alone with a pupil, Loss of pupil dignity
- V. **Administration of medication:** by trained staff only
- VI. **Recreation breaks for pupils** students interaction with other classes, adequate supervision
- VII. **Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils** injury to pupils alighting and disembarking off school buses or absconding
- VIII. **Hygiene routines:** one-to-one tuition
- IX. **Daily living skills:** one-to-one tuition
- X. **School trips**
- XI. **Incidents of challenging behaviour in school** injury to pupils (self-injurious behaviour) Injury to other pupils, injury to staff
- XII. **Incidents of challenging behaviour on the bus** injury to pupils through self injurious behaviour, injury to other pupils, injury to bus escort, distraction to bus driver
- XIII. **Care of vulnerable adult pupils (18+)** harm to pupil, loss of dignity
- XIV. **Administration of first aid** intervention versus non-intervention
- XV. **Curricular provision in respect on SPHE, RSE, Stay safe** risk of harm in inability to understand their vulnerability
- XVI. **Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils** interaction of younger and older pupils
- XVII. **Training of school personnel in child protection matters** harm not recognised or promptly reported, unawareness of vulnerabilities of pupils
- XVIII. **Recruitment of school personnel** (new staff, student teachers, July provision) harm not recognised or promptly reported, staff unaware of student's needs
- XIX. **Use of ICT by pupils in school** bullying if unsupervised

- XX. **Application of sanctions under the school's Code of behaviour policy**
- XXI. **Children in care** harm not recognised or promptly reported
- XXII. **Use of video/photography/other media** Member of school personnel communicating with pupils of accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting digital device or other manner

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

- I. **Intimate care policy:** Trained staff only, call for a second person when required, removal of clothing by pupils
- II. **Swimming policy:** no adult and child on their own in a dressing room
- III. **Outdoor teaching activities:** Work experience policy, Integration policy, public transport procedures, trips to cafes etc. are risk assessed. Management of incidents of challenging behaviour in the community
- IV. **One-to-one teaching procedures:** individualised procedures for pupils, Designated area for bells, assigned runners, TEAM, informing teacher if they are leaving the room
- V. **Management of long term Health Conditions and Administration of medication policy** by trained staff only using school safe storage system, Emergency medication as per individualised care plan
- VI. **Recreation breaks for pupils** Teacher supervision roster, tutor roster, garden schedule
- VII. **Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils** Alight and disembarking off school buses with tutor and bus escort carry over, teacher front door roster, pupils leave with authorised adults only, bus escorts do not disembark children until staff member has come to collect them

- VIII. **Hygiene routines and toileting:** one-to-one teaching, teacher informed when leaving and on return, individualised procedures for pupils
- IX. **Daily living skills:** one-to-one teaching, teacher informed when leaving and on return
- X. **School trips** each trip is risk assessed
- XI. **Incidents of challenging behaviour in school** individual behaviour support plans, behaviour support policy, code of behaviour policy, appropriate use of restraint (MAPA training) health and safety policy
- XII. **Incidents of challenging behaviour on school buses** Behaviour support plans, behaviour support policy, code of behaviour policy, appropriate use of restraint (MAPA training) health and safety policy
- XIII. **Teaching and care of vulnerable adults** individual behaviour support plans, intimate care policy, behaviour support policy and MAPA training
- XIV. **Administration of first aid by trained staff including bus escorts** safe storage of first aid supplies detailed in Health and Safety policy, epilepsy care plans
- XV. **Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe** SPHE curriculum implemented both in individualised programmes (IEP) and at class level, RSE curriculum to age and understanding of pupil (RSE policy) Stay Safe is differentiated to age and understanding of pupil.
- XVI. **Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils** Anti-bullying policy, segregated yard time for various classes
- XVII. **Training of school personnel in child protection matters** child protection training for all School personnel, teachers, OT and SLT are mandated persons and DLP and DDLP. Child safeguarding statement and DES procedures made available to all staff, BOM records all records of staff and board training.
- XVIII. **Recruitment of school personnel (new staff, student teachers, July provision)** Vetting procedures: reference checks, explanation of gaps in CVs, statutory declaration, confidentiality agreement, staff induction pack with Child safeguarding statement and DES procedures, staff to view TUSLA training and any other online training offered by PDST. Policy on new staff/student teachers/volunteers/visiting contractors.
- XIX. **Use of information and Communication Technology by pupils in the school.** ICT policy, anti-bullying policy and code of behaviour policy
- XX. **Application of sanctions under the school's Code of behaviour policy** Code of behaviour policy for students and staff
- XXI. **Children in care** policy on communication with external agencies
- XXII. **Use of video/photography/other media policy** including mobile phone policy for staff

XXIII Distance Learning

Since the COVID19 pandemic, children are engaging in live distance learning, known as synchronous learning. This involves children using digital devices to engage with the school. The school, in general, takes the same position on online interactions as it does on offline interactions. If something occurs online that is a child protection concern, it will be treated in the same manner. It is impossible to predict all the risks; however, the following is recommended for all parties:

- Children should not be alone with any device. A parent or other caregiver should be in the same room as the child if he/she is engaging in a synchronous online class.
- A staff member should never arrange to speak to a single pupil in an online forum
- Where a meeting takes place between a family and a teacher, the teacher will record and file the notes of the meeting.

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 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.

Appendix A

The Board of Management of Abalta Special School declares that:

At Primary Level –

- There is a programme for Social, Personal and Health Education for all students in the school. This is evidenced in the Cuntas Miosuil documents compiled each month by the teachers, showing the content of what has been taught.
- The Stay Safe Programme is implemented within the school. As well as the explicit teaching of the content of the Stay Safe Programme, the Board recognizes that our students need many more opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding underpinning this programme. This is facilitated by revisiting aspects of the programme content a number of times, in different contexts and in real life situations. This aims to encourage the students to generalise what is learned into their everyday lives, and practice the skills needed to keep themselves safe.

At Post Primary Level –

- There is a Social Personal and Health Education Programme for all students in Junior Cycle. This is evidenced in the Cuntas Miosuil documents compiled by the teachers each month, showing the content of what was taught.
- There is a Relationships and Sexuality Education programme (RSE) for all students in the post primary section of the school (pending parental consent).
- There is an opportunity for all students to further develop their Social, Personal and Health Education skills beyond Junior Cycle. The content of the curriculum at Senior Cycle will also focus heavily on Social, Personal and Health Education, as the students begin to focus on independent life skills. As appropriate, a teacher may also decide to do an ASDAN module in this area. The content of what has been taught will also be evidenced in the Cuntas Miosuil documents.
- The LILP students are taught Wellbeing and Personal Care Priority Learning Units (PLU's) 400 hours over 3 years

At a whole school level -

- Teachers' planning and teaching follows a thematic approach. These themes run on a two-yearly rolling programme as outlined below.

Year 1:

Sep- Oct: Myself and my family

Nov- Dec: Taking Care of my Body/ Growing and Changing

Jan – Feb: Life Skills/ Functional Skills

Mar- April: Safety and Protection

May – June: Relating to Others

Year 2:

Sep – Oct: Self Identity

Nov – Dec: Personal Safety/ Stay Safe

Jan – Feb: My Friends and family

Mar – April: Transitioning

May – June: Choices/ Decisions

**Please note the use of the Stay Safe Programme resource is clearly marked in all teachers plans.*