

St Mark's JNS



Child Safeguarding Procedures 25/26

Principal: Deirdre Ní Bhroin
Deputy Principal: Mark Fennelly



The Board of Management,
St. Mark's Junior National School,
Springfield,
Tallaght,
Dublin 24.

Uimhir Rolla 19472W

Ph. 01-4512076

Child Safeguarding Statement

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, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of St. Mark's J.N.S. has agreed the following child protection policy:

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 as part of this overall child protection policy. This Policy is supported by the more detailed prevention, practices and policies detailed below.
2. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Deirdre Ní Bhroin - Principal**
3. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Mark Fennelly - Deputy Principal**
4. In its policies, practices and activities, St. Mark's J.N.S. 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 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
 - fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters. The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult or pupil with a special vulnerability.
5. This section of the child protection policy includes a list of our school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to child protection

These include:

Prevention: Policies, Procedures, Practices -

- SPHE Curriculum: Stay Safe Programme
- Strand Units on 'Safety and Protection'
- Pastoral Care Policy & Practice
- The School Code of Behaviour
- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Connection Plan
- Restorative Practices, Circles & Approaches
- Health and Safety Statement
- Intimate Care Needs - procedures
- Friendship & Inclusion Policy
- Attendance Strategy
- Supervision Of Pupils
- Sporting Activities
- School Tours/ Outings
- Outside coaches vetting
- I.T. Acceptable use Policy

The Board has ensured that the necessary policies, protocols or practices as appropriate are in place in respect of each of the above listed items.

6. This policy has been made available to school personnel and St. Mark's JNS Parent Teacher Association and is readily accessible to parents on request.
7. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in 21st of September 2025 and will be reviewed annually.



D. Harper

Signed: _____

Don Harper

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____

Deirdre Ni Bhroin

Principal /Secretary Board of Management

Date: 21st of September 2025

Date: 21st of September 2025

Date of next review: September 27

The Child Protection Policy

Introductory Statement:

The staff, parents and management of St. Mark's Junior School have developed and agreed this Policy in line with current recommendations and guidelines relating to child abuse prevention and child protection guidelines.

This policy addresses the responsibilities of the school in the following areas

1. Prevention – curriculum provision
2. Procedures – procedures for dealing with concerns/disclosures
3. Practice – best practice in child protection.

An individual copy of this policy document and the appended section from the Department of Education and Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures will be made available to all staff.

It is incumbent on all staff to familiarise themselves with:

'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017' and **'Children First, National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children'**

This policy aims to:

- Create a safe, trusting, telling, responsive and caring environment
- Provide a personal safety skills education which specifically addresses abuse prevention for all children in the school.
- Develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection amongst the whole school community
- Put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children and staff
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of and familiar with 'Children First' and D.E.S Child Protection Guidelines and procedures in relation to reporting concerns and/or disclosures of child abuse.
- Provide for ongoing training in this and related areas for all school staff.

Prevention:

The Stay Safe Programme is the primary resource used in this school to provide education for children on abuse prevention. The programme is taught as part of the schools SPHE curriculum under the strand unit Safety and Protection (Personal Safety). Parents will be informed on the enrolment of their child that the Stay Safe Programme is used in the school and a copy of Stay Safe 'A Parent's Guide' provided.

Procedures:

All teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff, secretarial and care-taking staff in the school will follow the recommendations for reporting concerns or disclosures as outlined in 'Children First' and D.E.S Child Protection Guidelines and procedures

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The Board of Management of this school has appointed **Deirdre Ní Bhroin as the DLP** and **Mark Fennelly as the deputy DLP**. The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection and will represent the school in all dealings with Health Boards, An Garda Síochána and other parties in connection with allegations of abuse. All matters pertaining to the processing or investigation of child abuse should be proceeded through the DLP. In the case of either of the above roles being unfilled, Sarah O'Brien will fill the vacant role.

Confidentiality

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse should only be shared on a need to know basis in the interests of the child. Giving information to those who need to have that information for the protection of a child who may have been or has been abused, is not a breach of confidentiality.

The DLP who is submitting a report to Tusla or an Garda Síochána should inform the parent/guardian unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place that child at further risk.

Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, provides immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of Tusla or any member of an Garda Síochána. This means that even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took the action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith making the report. The Act provides significant protection for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including dismissal. (Child Protection Guidelines D.E.S page 6).

PRACTICE:

The staff and Board of Management of this school have identified the following as areas of specific concern in relation to child protection. Following discussion and consultation the staff and Board of Management have agreed that the following practices be adopted:

Physical Contact:

This must always be appropriate.

We are a Junior School and safe touch is part of the day.

Staff are continuously reminded of what constitutes safe touch in line with the Department of Education Guidelines (*Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations*, Dec '24)

Children must at all times feel safe and contact must be on their terms only.

Visitors/Guest Speakers/Student Teachers/Substitute Teachers/Coaches

These are vetted and are generally part of 'Educational Agencies'.

A teacher must be present at all times when a visitor is in the class.

Children with Specific Toileting/Intimate Care Needs:

- In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting/intimate care a meeting will be convened, at the earliest convenient time.
- Parents/Guardians, Principal, Class teacher, SNA and, if appropriate, the pupil will attend.
- The specific care needs of the child, and how the school will meet them, will be clarified.
- Personnel involved in this care will be identified.
- Provision for occasions when staff are absent will be outlined (e.g. substitute SNA will not generally be involved in any intimate care. Any change of personnel will be discussed with the pupil, if appropriate).
- Two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care needs.
- Any changes from agreed procedures will be discussed with Parents/Guardians and pupil and noted in writing to the pupil's file.
- As far as possible the pupil will be involved in identification of his/her personal requirements, wishes, changes etc.
- A written copy of the agreement will be kept in the pupils file.
- At all times the dignity and privacy of the pupil will be paramount in addressing intimate care needs.
- Staff will wear protective gloves.

Toileting Accidents:

- At the Junior Infant Induction Meetings, the school procedures will be outlined to parents and they will be asked to submit in writing specific wishes if different from the school procedures.
- A supply of clean underwear, wipes, tracksuit bottoms etc. will be kept in the school.
- In the first instance the pupil will be offered fresh clothing to clean and change themselves.
- If, for any reason, the child is unable to clean or change themselves, the procedure outlined by parents will be followed.
- If the child soils themselves, their parents will be called. If parents cannot be reached the child will be attended to.
- If staff must clean/change the child, two members of staff, familiar to the child if possible will attend to him/her.
- Parents will be notified of these accidents.
- A record of the incident will be kept.

Where the above is not possible or when the accident is beyond the 'norm' Parents will be sent for.

One-to-one Teaching:

- All class doors must have a glass panel.
- In general children are withdrawn in groups of two or more.
- One to one teaching is only done with written parental consent and where the teacher feels comfortable doing so.

Changing for Tours/Games/PE/Swimming:

This only applies to changing at the swimming pool in St. Mark's Junior School.

- An adult should never be alone with a child.
- Supervision of changing rooms will be by 2 or more teachers at all times.
- Ensure adult checks that toilets are clear from general public and safe for our children to use.
- More than 1 adult to be present at all times.

Recruitment and Selection of Staff:

- We follow CPSMA Guidelines and all new staff must be vetted and receive Garda clearance.

General Conduct:

- Staff should be mindful at all times of their own conduct and personal safety.
- All relationships should be of a mutual respecting nature.
- It is the personal responsibility of all staff to never put themselves or a child in a situation that might later be seen as unsafe for either party.

Supervision of Pupils:

- Pupils must never be left alone/unsupervised.
- When a teacher needs to absent him/herself the responsibility for supervision must be passed to another teacher.
- In the event of this not being possible the Principal should be contacted so that cover can be provided.

Internet Use:

- We have an Acceptable Use Policy in St. Mark's Junior School but pupils should never have unsupervised access to the internet.

Photos:

- Permission is sought from Parents / Guardians for children's photographs to be taken and used as deemed appropriate by principal

While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable a full record of the incident should be made and reported to the principal and parents.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES/PLANNING AREAS:

Prevention:	SPHE Curriculum, Strand Unit on 'Safety and Protection', The School Code of Behaviour Anti Bullying Policy / Bí Cineálta Restorative Practice, Circles and approaches Teaching Stay Safe Rules
Procedures:	Code of Behaviour Health and Safety Statement

Behaviours of Concern
Practice: Swimming Policy
School Tours/Outings
IT - Acceptable use policy.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

This Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises.

Staff will be requested on a regular basis to review the school policy in this area and every effort will be made to ensure that the attention of all new staff is drawn to the school child protection policy.

The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

Reviewed and ratified September 2025

Signed:

D. Hafer

Chairperson



Child Protection Guidelines Checklist for School Employees

Designated Liaison Person: Deirdre Ni Bhroin

Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Mark Fennelly

If a child discloses information to you:-

- Listen
- Do not ask leading questions
- Offer reassurance but do not promise not to tell
- Explain that other adults may need to be told - DLP
- Do not stop the child speaking
- Do not over react or comment
- Inform DLP - If you have a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern that a child is at risk or has suffered abuse,
- The DLP should /may contact Tusla for advice
- At the earliest opportunity, record accurately what the child has said – Using the child's own words.
- Record date/time and context of the disclosure. Use child's registration number – Not child's name
- Facts only
- Retain records for a period of 21 years in keeping with the school's Record Keeping Policy

The following should also be reported to the DLP:

- An account from a person who saw a child being abused
- Injury consistent with abuse
- Dysfunctional behaviour
- Implausible explanations for injury or behaviour
- Consistent evidence over a period of time that a child is being emotionally or physically neglected.
- Concerns of a child welfare nature

St Mark's JNS

In accordance with Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of children and in line with our Child Protection Policy.



The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in St. Mark's Junior National School is:

Deirdre Ní Bhroin

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) is:

Mark Fennelly