

Mandatory Template 1: Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment **Template**

Child Safeguarding Statement

Gort National School is a primary school providing 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 2017](#) and [Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements](#), the Board of Management of Gort National 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 Marie Clune.**
- 3 The **Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Mary Mellick.**
- 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 the 23rd of November 2022.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on the 23rd of November 2022.

Signed: 

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 12/12/2024

Signed: 

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 12/12/2024

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of Gort National 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 2017*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of [name of school].

1. List of school activities

- Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one Teaching
- Distance learning to include on-line communication
- Outdoor teaching activities
- Sporting Activities
- Swimming lessons in Lady Gregory Hotel (1st- 4th Class)
- School outings
- Use of toilet areas in schools
- Fundraising events involving pupils
- Use of off-site facilities for school activities e.g. Library, GAA Pitch, St Colman's Park etc.
- School transport arrangements (to matches, swimming, tours etc.)
- Care of children with special educational needs, including intimate care where needed
- Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils
- 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
- 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
- Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school
- Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour including detention of pupils, confiscation of phones etc.
- Students participating in work experience in the school
- Student teachers undertaking training placement in school
- Use of video/photography/other media to record school events
- Active Schools Meetings and other meetings involving students, staff and other visiting adults / parents
- Students being sent to alternative classrooms when a teacher is absent

- Risk of pupils running away from supervising adult/classroom/school grounds when overwhelmed
- Teachers and pupils teaching and learning in classroom
- HSCL School Activities eg Parent Meetings, Classes for Parents etc.
- Movement of pupils around the school E.g. Pupils walking to the office, pupils walking to SEN rooms, pupils walking to another classroom, pupils coming into the school building from the yard during lunch etc.

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 or parent 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 is 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 or during distance learning
- 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 in one-to-one teaching / 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 caused by a member of school personnel whilst using online digital learning platforms

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


(insert the procedures in place to address risks of harm in this section)

- 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. Copy in both Staff Rooms.
- 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 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 a *Supervision Policy* to ensure appropriate supervision of children during, assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as toilets etc.
- The school has door access systems on both school buildings.
- The school has in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of school outings. *See School Tour Policy*
- The school has a *Health and Safety Statement & 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 follows The Teaching Council Code of Conduct for teaching staff.
- The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff.
- The school has a *Special Educational Needs Policy*.
- The school has an *Intimate Care Policy* 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.
- The school ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement.
- The school encourages staff to avail of relevant training.
- The school encourages board of management members to avail of relevant training.
- The school maintains records of all staff and board member training.
- The school has in place a Code of Behaviour for pupils.
- The school has in place an *ICT / Acceptable Usage Policy* in respect of usage of ICT by pupils.
- The school has in place a *Mobile Phone & Devices Policy* in respect of usage of mobile phones by pupils and staff.
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the use of External Persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum.
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the use of external sports coaches.
- The school has in place clear procedures for one-to-one teaching activities. See appendix attached.
- The school has in place a policy and procedures in respect of student teacher placements and students undertaking work experience in the school. See Work Experience & Placement Policy

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.

Signed: 

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 12/12/2024

Signed: 

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 12/12/2024

Appendix 2: Programmes with relevance to Child Protection

The following programmes are taught in Gort NS in order to increase awareness around child protection issues and for the prevention of abuse in any form:

- Relationship & Sexuality Programme (RSE) – *Mandatory*
- Stay Safe Programme New edition January 2017 – *Mandatory*
- Walk Tall Programme
- SPHE Curriculum & Making the Links (A useful manual which links the first 3 programmes to the content objectives of the SPHE curriculum.
- Gort NS Code of Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policy

Appendix 3: School Policies with Regards to Child Protection

The following school policies have relevance for child protection and are available for viewing in the school office.

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Health & Safety Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- School Attendance Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Intimate Care Needs Policy
- School Tour Policy
- Guidelines for working with External Partners
- Swimming Policy
- SEN Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy (ICT) / Mobile Phone Policy
- Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures
- Data Protection Policy
- Work Experience Placement Policy

Appendix 4: Summary of Codes of Best Practice

Recruitment and selection of volunteers

All staff employed (or volunteering) must be Garda Vetted through the **National Vetting Bureau (NVB)** and will not be allowed work with children unless they provide a copy of this to the school.

The Teaching Council arranges vetting for teachers newly appointed to the school before commencement of employment. Staff will be asked for copies of their vetting forms and these will be kept in the Principal's office. New Garda Vetting Procedures apply for all employees / volunteers from 29th April 2016 – **See Circular 0031/2016**

Supervision of children

School routines and procedures will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of school at all breaks and on all trips and tours. See *Supervision Policy*.

Early withdrawal of pupils

Any child leaving the school before the end of the school day must be signed out by a parent / guardian in the classroom.

Collection of children at home time

Infants are collected at 1:40pm and are released into the care of parents / guardians or adults identified to the school (by parents / guardians) at the beginning of the school year e.g. child minder etc. If a person outside of these named adults is to collect an infant pupil on a given day, the school must be informed of the identity of this other adult either verbally in person, or by phone, or in writing.

Children from 1st to 6th Class are released from class at home time (2:30pm for 3rd to 6th classes and 2:40pm for 1st and 2nd) and depending on arrangements made by their family, they are either met by an adult etc. or commence their walk home. Once the school is aware a child has not been collected a phone call is made to their parent / guardian. If following a reasonable length of time, there is no answer from the parent or emergency contacts, and a member of staff can no longer stay in school the Gardaí may be phoned.

Changes in Family Circumstances

If there any changes in family circumstances (separation of parents etc.), the school will continue to release the child into the care of either parent (assuming both have guardianship).

In the event of a court order, furnished to the school by a parent, the school will only release the child into the care of the adult / provide access as directed by the court. In such circumstances, the school has internal systems in place to ensure communication with relevant staff members, so that they are aware of these changes.

One-To-Teaching / Activities

Any activity which involves a child to staff member (teacher or SNA) ratio of 1:1, should take place in a room with a glass window panel on the door for visibility. The door of the room in which they are working should be left open for the duration. Any blinds etc, on the glass panel on the door, should be opened for the duration also.

Visitors/ Guest Speakers

Teachers on yard duty will be aware of visitors entering the school yard and will re-direct them to the office etc. as necessary. Guest speakers or External Teachers (even if appropriately vetted) are never left unsupervised with pupils. The class teacher or supervising teacher is responsible for the pupils at all times.

Swimming

Children walk to the swimming pool (1st and 2nd Class) or travel to the swimming pool by bus (3rd and 4th Class) accompanied by a minimum of two members of staff of Gort NS. The teacher/adult stands at the door of the changing room which is slightly ajar. Children line up on the corridor and teachers supervise until every child is out of the changing room. The role of the adult is supervisory only, and is not to assist. If the need arises (physical needs etc), a parent may accompany his or her own child (only) to a private cubicle if he / she is having difficulty with changing. The parent should discuss this need with the Principal in advance of lessons, so that supervising teachers / SNAs are aware that the child may be withdrawn to a private changing cubicle by their parent in this instance.

If a child needs to go to the toilet during the pool time, he / she is accompanied from the pool area to the bathroom door by the teacher and escorted back to the pool when finished.

Travelling Arrangements

Teachers / staff members will not carry children in their cars unless in an emergency and then the child must travel with two members of staff in the car.

Induction of Teachers and Ancillary Staff

The DLP, Marie Clune, will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of this Child Safeguarding Statement, DES Child Protection Procedures and the *Children First Guidelines*.

Attendance

We monitor trends in non-attendance in terms of possible neglect, physical or emotional abuse. *See Attendance Policy*

Toileting / Intimate Care Needs

If a child requires assistance with toileting (regularly or as a once off due to illness etc.), two members of staff should assist the child in so far as staff levels allow. *See Intimate Care Policy.*

DVDs

Staff will always ensure that any DVD shown or video footage shown to the children is age appropriate.

Internet Safety

Children will only have access to websites deemed age-appropriate. Gort NS uses the NCSE filters on all school computers as advised and provided for by DES.

Photographs of children are only placed on the school website / other sites deemed appropriate by the school with parental permission.

Photographs

Parents are reminded at the start of events not to take photos of children.
