



Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment
Ballinode Community College & Sligo College of Further Education

Child Safeguarding Statement

Ballinode Community College & Sligo College of Further Education is a Post-Primary and Post Leaving Certificate school providing post-primary and PLC education to pupils from First Year to Post Leaving Cert (both adults and children).

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 Ballinode Community College & Sligo College of Further Education has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

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

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **David McGuinness**.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Sinead McGarvey**.

The Relevant person is **David McGuinness**.

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.

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.


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.

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 **21st March 2018**.

Most Recent Update: **1st June 2023**

Signed: 
Chairperson, BOM

Signed: 
Principal / Secretary, BOM

Date: 1st June, 2023

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of Ballinode Community College & Sligo College of Further Education

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 Ballinode Community College & Sligo College of Further Education. Ballinode Community College & Sligo College of Further Education is a constituent college of Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB.

1. List of school activities

- Post Primary Classes
- Post Primary Extra Curricular Activities including educational trips and excursions and sporting activities
- Post Leaving Cert and Further Education Classes
- Post Leaving Cert and Further Education Extra Curricular Activities including educational trips and excursions and sporting activities
- Night classes (organised by MSL ETB and delivered at Ballinode Community College).

A further breakdown of these activities is as follows:

1. Daily arrival and dismissal of pupils
2. Recreation breaks for pupils
3. Classroom teaching
4. One-to-one teaching
5. One-to-one counselling
6. Outdoor teaching activities
7. Sporting Activities
8. School outings
9. School trips involving overnight stay
10. School trips involving foreign travel
11. Use of toilet/changing/shower areas in schools
12. Annual Sports Day
13. Fundraising events involving pupils
14. Use of off-site facilities for school activities
15. School transport arrangements including use of bus escorts
16. Care of children with special educational needs, including intimate care where needed
17. Care of any vulnerable adult students, including intimate care where needed
18. Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use of restraint where required

19. Administration of Medicine
20. Administration of First Aid
21. Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe
22. Prevention and dealing with bullying amongst pupils
23. Training of school personnel in child protection matters
24. Use of external personnel to supplement curriculum
25. Use of external personnel to support sports and other extra-curricular activities
26. Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/ needs such as
 - Pupils from ethnic minorities/migrants
 - Members of the Traveller community
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children
 - Pupils perceived to be LGBT
 - Pupils of minority religious faiths
 - Children in care
 - Children on CPNS
27. Recruitment of school personnel including:
 - Teachers/SNA's (ETB HR)
 - Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners (ETB HR)
 - 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
28. Participation by pupils in ceremonies and / or instruction external to the school
29. Use of Information and Communication Technology by pupils in school
30. Application of sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour including detention of pupils, confiscation of phones etc.
31. Students participating in work experience in the school
32. Students from the school participating in work experience elsewhere
33. Student teachers undertaking training placement in school
34. Use of video/photography/other media to record school events
35. After school use of school premises by other organisations
36. Use of school premises by other organisation during school day
37. Breakfast club
38. Homework club/evening study

2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities -

- Risk of physical harm / assault to child / young person at the hands of an adult (corridors / toilets / classrooms / school grounds).
- Risk of sexual assault to child / young person at the hands of an adult (corridors / toilets / classrooms / school grounds).
- Risk of exposure to drugs and alcohol facilitated by an adult (corridors / toilets / classrooms / school grounds)
- Exposure to potential harm to child / young person and the impact of that harm on the child / young person's future well-being (corridors / toilets / classrooms / school grounds)
- Vulnerability of children with SEN in mixed Post Primary / PLC environment
- Risks associated with work experience and outreach activities at both Post Primary and PLC Levels
- 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 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 participating in out of school activities e.g. school trip, swimming lessons
- Risk of harm due to inappropriate use of online remote teaching and learning communication platform such as an uninvited person accessing the lesson link, students being left unsupervised for long periods of time in breakout rooms
- Risk of harm due to bullying of child
- Risk of harm due to racism
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children in school (corridors / toilets / classrooms / school grounds)
- 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 (corridors / toilets / classrooms / school grounds)
- Risk of harm due to children inappropriately accessing/using computers, social media, phones and other devices while at school
- Risk of harm to child while a child is receiving intimate care
- Risk of harm due to inadequate code of behaviour
- Risk of harm in one-to-one teaching, counselling, 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

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

- Separate Classrooms for PLC & 2nd Level Cohorts
- Separate Bathrooms for PLC & 2nd Level Cohorts
- Separate Break times for PLC & 2nd Level Cohorts
- Supervision policy to ensure appropriate supervision of children during classes, breaks and school in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc.
- Garda Vetting for all staff
- Garda Vetting for all PLC students
- PLC & Post Primary Student Induction to include Child Protection
- Staff Training and Induction in Child Protection to include the following:
 - 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
 - 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:
 - Has provided each member of school 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
 - Maintains records of all staff and board member training
 - SPHE & RSE Programme for all 2nd Level students
 - Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle
 - RSE / Safety Training for students with ID and SEN
 - Home School Community Liaison Service
 - Parents Child Protection information and training events
 - Appointment of DLP and DDLP
 - Annual Child Protection Review at BOM level
 - Repeated correspondence and meetings with Chief Executive Officer(s) and Director of FET around risk presentation (2013-20) and incidents in the college where children have been placed at risk.
 - Application to Dept. of Education & Skills for capital grant to physically separate student cohorts in existing building
 - Meetings with SOLAS management and Director of FET around risk presentation (2016-18)
 - Anti-Bullying Policy which fully adheres to the requirements of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*

- The school undertakes anti-racism awareness initiatives
- Policy and clear procedures in respect of school outings (P)
- Health & Safety policy
- Codes of conduct for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff)
- Agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff
- Special Educational Needs policy
- Intimate care policy/plan in respect of students who require such care
- Policy and procedures for the administration of medication to pupils
- Policy and procedures for the administration of First Aid (P)
- Code of Behaviour for pupils
- 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
- Mobile phone policy in respect of usage of mobile phones by pupils
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- Home School Liaison policy and related procedures
- Policy and procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum (P)
- Policy and procedures for the use of external sports coaches (P)
- Policy and procedures for one-to-one teaching activities (P)
- Policy and procedures for one-to-one counselling (P)
- Policy and procedures in respect of student teacher placements (P)
- Policy and procedures in respect of students undertaking work experience in the school (P)
- Policy and procedures in respect of pupils of the school undertaking work experience in external organisations

(P) denotes Policy Pending (under consultation MSL ETB)

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

History of notification of Risk:

In November 2013 the Board of Management of Ballinode Community College & Sligo College of Further Education wrote to the then CEO raising their concerns about the Child Protection implications of continuing to place 2nd Level and PLC students in the one space. The Board cited three specific incidents where students were placed at risk with the college. The Board requested that the CEO raise the issue with the Department Of Education & Skills

In March 2014, a parent of a second level student withdrew her daughter as a consequence of her daughter being under threat from a male PLC student, citing the college's inability to keep her daughter safe. The CE was made aware of this situation.

In December 2017 the Principal wrote to the current CE regarding a serious incident placing children at 2nd Level at risk, including students with moderate learning difficulties. The CE forwarded correspondence related to the issue to the Department Of Education & Skills

The Board of Management of Ballinode Community College and Sligo College of Further Education has been proactive in identifying risk and investing resources into minimising its impact. It has also conducted feasibility studies and developed plans to provide an effective solution to the issue as it presents in our college. The college made application to the Department of Education & Skills for a capital project to separate the two student cohorts within our existing building, but this was refused in 2018 on the basis that numbers in the post primary school were too small to justify funding the proposal.

In the past seven years, the Board has met on separate occasions with two MSL ETB CEs, the MSL ETB Director of FET, SOLAS Director of Organisational Planning and SOLAS Director of Finance to raise Child Protection concerns and identify the risks the current college configuration represents.

The BOM and MSL ETB are currently investigating the future separation of the two cohorts in separate buildings, and potentially on separate sites. Discussions have been held with SOLAS and DES at CE and Director level in relation to these proposals, but to date there has been no movement in relation to this.

To date no progress has been made at Departmental level on addressing the stated risks.

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.

1st June, 2023