



Portmarnock Community School

Child Safeguarding Statement

Effective: September 2025 – May 2026

Portmarnock Community School is a co-educational post-primary school providing education to students from First Year to Leaving Certificate Year. The school also provides a programme of Adult Education in its Night School.

1. Nature of Service and Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm

In accordance with the Children First Act 2015 (as amended), the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2023), and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2023), the Board of Management of Portmarnock Community School has adopted and will implement the Department's procedures fully and without modification.

We are committed to safeguarding the children under our care and ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and visitors provide a safe and supportive environment. 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.

2. Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP

Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and 'Relevant Person': **Ms Helen Tobin (Principal)**

Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL): **Mr David Clarke (Deputy Principal)**

3. Principles of Best Practice in Child Protection and Welfare

- Recognise that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance.
- Fully comply with all statutory obligations under child protection legislation.
- Cooperate fully with Tusla, An Garda Síochána, and other relevant statutory authorities.
- Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents to children.
- Practise a culture of openness with parents/guardians.
- Respect confidentiality in all child protection matters.
- Promote a safe, inclusive, respectful school environment through policies such as the Code of Behaviour, Wellbeing Framework, and Anti-Bullying Policy (as per Cineáltas).
- Provide ongoing training and support to staff and Board members (in collaboration with Tusla/Oide/ACCS).
- Recognise and support vulnerable pupils, including those with AEN and those from minority groups.

The following procedures are in place in relation to members of staff:

- 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 and 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- 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 Youth and available on the gov.ie website.
- In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training of staff in respect to the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) the School:
 - Will provide each member of staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Provides relevant training to all member of staff
 - Provides relevant training to all member of the Board of Management
 - 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*.
- In this school the Board has appointed the above named DLP as the 'Relevant Person' to be the first point of contact in respect of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement. All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the *Children First Act 2015*

4. Risk Assessment

The school has carried out a Written Risk Assessment as required by Section 11 of the Children First Act. This includes:

- Identification of school activities that may pose risk of harm to children.
- Evaluation of potential risks including harm from bullying, online activity, physical contact, and one-to-one teaching.
- Control measures and policies in place to manage risks (e.g. vetting, supervision, behaviour codes, AI/device usage policy).
- Procedures for the use of external persons and visitors on school grounds.

The Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after any material change.

5. Procedures

- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member or volunteer.
- Procedures for the safe recruitment and Garda vetting of school personnel and external tutors/coaches.
- Procedures for the provision of information, training, and support to school personnel on child protection matters.
- Procedures for reporting child protection concerns to Tusla.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons.
- Procedures for one-to-one teaching, counselling, and use of digital platforms.
- An Anti-Bullying Policy consistent with the Cineáltas Action Plan.
- ICT and Acceptable Use Policies addressing risks of online harm, including misuse of AI.

All procedures listed are available on the school website or by request from the school office.

6. Implementation and Review

- This Statement has been provided to all school personnel, the Parents' Association, and the Patron/Trustees.
- It is displayed publicly in the school foyer and published on the school's website.
- A copy will be provided to Tusla or the Department of Education upon request.
- This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually, or as soon as practicable after a material change occurs.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on 10 June 2025.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____

Principal / Secretary to the Board

