

PORTMARNOCK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS1)

Academic Year: September 2026 – June 2027

Prepared in accordance with: **Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025** (Circular 0041/2025)

Key Personnel

Named Persons — Child Protection	
Designated Liaison Person (DLP) & Relevant Person	Ms Helen Tobin (Principal)
Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP)	Ms Elaine Moran (Deputy Principal)
Chairperson, Board of Management	Mr Michael Behan
Date of Adoption by Board	13th May 2026
Date of Next Review	June 2027 or upon any material change

1. Nature of Service

Portmarnock Community School is a co-educational post-primary school providing education to students from First Year to Leaving Certificate. The school also provides a programme of Adult Education through its Night School. The school is under the patronage of the DDLETB, Loreto Education Trust and Dublin Dioceses. Relevant Management body: ACCS (Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools).

In accordance with the Children First Act 2015 (as amended), the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Addendum to Children First 2019, and the **Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025** (Circular 0041/2025), the Board of Management of Portmarnock Community School has **formally adopted and will implement fully and without modification** the Department of Education's child protection procedures.

Child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and are reflected in all of the school's policies, procedures, practices and activities. The school is committed to safeguarding children in its care and to ensuring all staff, volunteers, and visitors contribute to a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment.

2. Principles of Best Practice in Child Protection and Welfare

The Board of Management of Portmarnock Community School is committed to the following principles:

- Recognise that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance.
 - Fully comply with all statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and all relevant child protection legislation.
 - Cooperate fully with Tusla – Child and Family Agency, An Garda Síochána, and all other relevant statutory authorities.
 - Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks.
 - Practise openness with parents and guardians while at the same time respecting the privacy rights of the child.
 - Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
 - Promote a safe, inclusive, and respectful school environment through the Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy (Bí Cineálta), Wellbeing Framework, and all other relevant school policies.
 - Provide ongoing child protection training and support to staff and Board members, including mandatory training under the **2025 Procedures**, in collaboration with Tusla, Oide, and the ACCS.
 - Recognise and proactively support the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with additional educational needs and those from minority or marginalised groups.
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3. Procedures in Place

3.1 Allegations Against School Personnel

In relation to any member of staff or volunteer who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission, or circumstance concerning a child attending the school, the school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the

Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025 and to the agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff as published on the gov.ie website.

New for 2025: Where a child protection concern is raised against the DLP or a member of the Board of Management, the school follows the specific procedures set out in the 2025 Procedures for such circumstances.

3.2 Safe Recruitment, References and Garda Vetting

In relation to the selection and recruitment of all school personnel 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.

New for 2025: The school operates a strengthened procedure for the seeking and checking of references for all persons taking up positions in the school, including volunteers, coaches, and external tutors, in line with the enhanced guidance in the 2025 Procedures.

3.3 Training and Information

In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training for all staff in respect of the identification and reporting of harm as defined in the Children First Act 2015, the school:

- Provides each member of staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement on commencement and upon any revision.
- Provides mandatory child protection training to all staff, including a whole-school closure day for training in the 2025 Procedures (to be completed by December 2026 via Oide).
- Provides specific DLP/DDLP training to the Designated and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons.
- Provides child protection awareness training to all members of the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management maintains records of all staff and Board member child protection training.

3.4 Reporting Child Protection Concerns to Tusla

All school personnel are required to adhere to the reporting procedures set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025, including mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015 in the case of registered teachers. The DLP is the first point of contact and is responsible for reporting concerns to Tusla.

New for 2025: The 2025 Procedures provide enhanced guidance on the reporting of retrospective abuse disclosures and on communicating with parents/guardians regarding reports made to Tusla.

3.5 Mandated Persons

All registered teachers employed by Portmarnock Community School are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015. The school maintains an up-to-date list of all mandated persons. The Board of Management has appointed the DLP named above as the Relevant Person in respect of this Child Safeguarding Statement.

3.6 Additional School Procedures

The following specific procedures are also in place at Portmarnock Community School:

- Procedures for one-to-one teaching, learning support, and counselling (open-door/glass panel policy; qualified professionals; parental awareness).
- Procedures for the use of digital platforms, ICT, AI tools, and social media by students (Acceptable Use Policy; ICT/AI Policy; parental consent; staff training).
- An Anti-Bullying Policy consistent with the BÍ Cineálta Action Plan on Bullying, addressing all forms including cyberbullying and identity-based bullying.
- Procedures for intimate care of students with additional educational needs (SEN Policy; individual intimate care plans; SNA training).
- Procedures for school trips, sporting activities, and overnight/foreign travel (trip risk assessments; supervision policies; parental consent).
- Procedures for volunteers, external coaches, tutors, and guest speakers (Garda vetting; code of conduct; sign-in/out system).
- Procedures for online safety including the use of AI tools in learning (Updated AUP; Digital Learning Protocol; staff and student training).
- Procedures for SPHE, RSE and Wellbeing programmes delivered in accordance with Department guidelines.
- Procedures in relation to child-on-child sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour between students (SPHE/RSE curriculum; restorative practice; teacher CPD).

- Procedures for managing school refusal, truancy, and poor attendance in line with TUSLA reporting (TESS) obligations.

All procedures listed above are available on the school website or upon request from the school office. This Child Safeguarding Statement should be read in conjunction with the school's Written Risk Assessment.

4. Written Risk Assessment

The Board of Management of Portmarnock Community School has carried out a written risk assessment as required by Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015. The Written Risk Assessment identifies school activities that may present a risk of harm to children, evaluates the level of that risk, and sets out the procedures in place to manage each identified risk.

The risk assessed is the risk of harm as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and is not general health and safety risk. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, the school has procedures in place to manage all identified risks.

The Written Risk Assessment for Portmarnock Community School 2026–2027 is attached as a separate document and forms part of this Child Safeguarding Statement.

The Written Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually, or as soon as practicable after any material change in school activities or circumstances.

5. Implementation, Communication and Review

- This Child Safeguarding Statement has been provided to all school personnel.
- It has been made available to the Parents' Association and the Patrons.
- It is displayed prominently in the school's public areas (including the main foyer) and is published on the school website.
- A copy will be provided to Tusla or the Department of Education and Youth upon request.
- A student-friendly version of this Safeguarding Statement is displayed in student-facing areas of the school.
- This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually at the latest, or as soon as practicable after any material change occurs, or following any child protection incident.

Note: *The requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025 that are new or revised since the 2023 Procedures will apply to Portmarnock Community School from the date of formal adoption of these procedures by the Board of Management.*

6. Formal Adoption by Board of Management

This Child Safeguarding Statement was formally adopted by the Board of Management of Portmarnock Community School at its meeting on:

Date: 13th May 2026

Signed:

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed:

Principal / Secretary to the Board

Date: _____