

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Child Safeguarding Statement

Sonas Special Junior Primary School is a special school providing Early Intervention education to pupils from 3 to 6 years old with a diagnosis of Autism.

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 \(revised 2023\)](#), the [Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023](#) and [Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements](#), the board of management of Sonas 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 (revised 2023)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement
- 2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Bairbre Doyle
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Karen Flowers
- 4 The Relevant Person is Bairbre Doyle
(The relevant person is one who can provide information in respect of how the child safeguarding statement was developed and will be able to provide the statement on request. This person can also be the DLP)
- 5 The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school and boarding school life and must be reflected in all of the school's/management authority's policies, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the board of management/management authority will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The board of management/management authority 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 and care of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

- 6 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 board of management adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the *Child Protection*

Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023), the relevant procedures set out in the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the gov.ie.

- In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, the board of management 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 gov.ie.
- 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 board of management
 - 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 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)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* including, in the case of registered teachers who are mandated persons, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.
- There is a procedure in place for maintaining a list of mandated persons. 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 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 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.

- 7 This statement has been published on the school website and has been provided to all members of school personnel 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.
- 8 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

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the board of management on

Signed: Diarmuid O Mathuna
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Bairbre Doyle
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 11th October 2023

Date: 11th October 2023

For information in respect of how the child safeguarding statement was developed or to request a copy of the statement, please contact the relevant person noted at the beginning of this child safeguarding statement

Phone: 021 4373164 or email: admin@sonascork.ie

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Written Assessment of Risk of Sonas Special Junior Primary 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 (revised 2023)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Sonas Special Junior Primary School.

List of school activities

Classrooms and adjoining Rainbow Rooms
Slide room
Soft Room
Playgrounds
Bike Track
Sensory Garden
Sand Shed

Water Pillow Room
Multi Activity Rooms
Sensory Room
Soft Room
Hall
Big Garden
Library
Music Room
Playroom
Social Training Trips on Bus
Walking Trips
School Tours
Events such as Cork Pops etc.

1.1 List of boarding facility activities

n/a

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

Close supervision of children at all times is necessary because of their young age and challenge associated with same

2.1 The boarding facility has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities

n/a

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

Procedures to be followed in strict accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)

3.1 The boarding facility has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment

n/a

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 (revised 2023)*

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.

Examples of activities, risks and procedures

The examples listed in this document are provided to assist schools/boarding facilities in undertaking their risk assessment under the Children First Act, 2015. Schools should note that this list of examples is not intended to be exhaustive. It is the responsibility of each school to ensure, as far as possible, that any other risks and procedures that are relevant to its own particular circumstances are identified and specified in the written risk assessment and that adequate procedures are in place to address all risks identified.

It is acknowledged that schools already have in place a range of policies, practices and procedures to mitigate the risk of harm to children while they are participating in activities and that some activities will carry low or minimal risks of harm compared to others. In the context of the risk assessment that must be undertaken, the Children First Act, 2015 refers to risk as “any potential for harm”. Therefore, it is important that, as part of its risk assessment process, each school lists and reviews all of its various activities (which shall include identifying those that may carry low risk of harm as well as those that carry higher risks of harm). Doing so will help the school to (1) identify, as required under the Children First Act, 2015, any risks of harm that may exist in respect of the school activities, (2) identify and assess the adequacy of the various procedures already in place to manage those risks of harm and (3) identify and put in place any such additional procedures as are considered necessary to manage any risk identified.

The Addendum to *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* published in January 2019 clarifies that organisations providing relevant services to children should consider the specific issue of online safety when carrying out their risk assessment and preparing their Child Safeguarding Statement.

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 (revised 2023)*.

Examples of School Activities

- Daily arrival and departure of pupils
- Recreation breaks for pupils
- Classroom teaching
- One-to-one teaching
- One-to-one learning support
- Outdoor teaching activities
- School outings
- Use of toilet/changing/ areas in schools

- School transport arrangements including use of bus escorts
- Care of children with special educational needs, including intimate care where needed,
- Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use of restraint where required in the interest of the pupils own health and safety
- Management of provision of food and drink
- Administration of Medicine
- Administration of First Aid
- Curricular provision in respect of SPHE
- Training of school personnel in child protection matters
- 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 Tusla's Child Protection Notification System (CPNS)
 - Children with medical needs
- Recruitment of school personnel including -
 - Teachers/SNAs
 - Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners
 - Visitors/contractors present in school during school hours
- Students participating in work experience in the school
- Use of video/photography/other media to record school events

Examples of Risks of Harm

- 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 a 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.
- 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
- Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communications between child and adult
- Risk of harm to children with SEN who have particular vulnerabilities, including medical vulnerabilities
- Risk of harm to child while a child is receiving intimate care
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner

Examples of Procedures to address risks of harm

- All school personnel are provided with a copy of the school *Child Safeguarding Statement*
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* are made available to all school personnel
- School personnel are required to adhere to the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023* and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the *Children First Act 2015* and its Addendum (2019)
- 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 yard/supervision staff ratios to ensure appropriate supervision of children during, assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as toilets, changing rooms etc.
- The school has in place a policy and clear procedures in respect of school
- The school has a Health and Safety policy
- The school adheres to the requirements of the Garda vetting legislation and relevant DE circulars in relation to recruitment and Garda vetting
- The school has a code of conduct for school personnel (teaching and non-teaching staff)
- The school complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for staff
- 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/students
- The school –
 - Has provided each member of school/boarding facility staff with a copy of the school 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
- The school has in place a policy and procedures for the administration of First Aid and a trained First Responder in the school
- The school has in place a policy governing the use of smart phones and tablet devices in the school/boarding facility by pupils/students as per circular 38/2018
- The school/boarding facility has in place a Critical Incident Management Plan