



Our Lady of Good Counsel School
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Our Lady of Good Counsel School

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2026

(Prepared in line with the Department of Education and Youth Child Protection Procedures for Schools and Children First requirements)

School: Our Lady of Good Counsel School

Chairperson of the Board of Management: Billy Murphy Final Safeguarding

Principal: Aisling Power

Designated Liaison Person (DLP): Aisling Power

Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP): Nollaig Moynihan

Date of Ratification: 29/09/2026

Date of Review: Annually or sooner if required

1. Introduction

Our Lady of Good Counsel School is a special school providing education for pupils aged 4 to 18 years. The school recognises the unique vulnerabilities of many pupils with additional educational, social, communication, behavioural and care needs and is committed to ensuring that every child is protected from harm and treated with dignity, respect and care.

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Children First Act 2015
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)
- Addendum to Children First (2019)

- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023)
- Any subsequent Department of Education and Youth (DEY) updates and Child Protection Procedures 2025 adopted by schools prior to the mandatory implementation date of 31 December 2026.gov+1
- Relevant GDPR and data protection requirements.gov+1

The Board of Management fully adopts and implements, without modification, the Child Protection Procedures for Schools as issued by the Department of Education and Youth.

2. School Ethos and Commitment

The Board of Management recognises that the welfare of children is paramount in all aspects of school life.

We are committed to:

- Providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.
- Protecting pupils from abuse, neglect, bullying and exploitation.
- Promoting children's rights, voice and participation.
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people.
- Ensuring compliance with all child protection legislation.
- Working collaboratively with parents, Tusla, An Garda Síochána and other agencies.
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality while prioritising child welfare.

The school also applies these principles to adult learners and former pupils who may have a special vulnerability.

3. Child Safeguarding Statement

The Board of Management has:

1. Conducted a risk assessment in accordance with Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015.
2. Adopted procedures to manage and reduce identified risks.
3. Appointed a Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
4. Appointed a Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP).

5. Ensured that all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
 6. Put in place measures for safer recruitment, supervision and training.
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4. Designated Liaison Person

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

Aisling Power

The DLP is responsible for:

- Receiving child protection concerns.
- Consulting with Tusla where appropriate.
- Making reports to Tusla.
- Maintaining secure child protection records.
- Advising staff on child protection matters.
- Presenting Child Protection Oversight Reports to the Board.

Deputy DLP

Nollaig Moynihan

The DDLP fulfils these functions when the DLP is unavailable.

5. Responsibilities of All School Personnel

All school personnel must:

- Be familiar with this policy.
- Recognise signs and indicators of abuse.
- Listen to and support children who disclose concerns.
- Record concerns accurately and promptly.
- Report concerns to the DLP without delay.
- Participate in required training.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

All registered teachers are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015 and must fulfil their statutory reporting obligations.

6. Categories of Abuse

School personnel must be alert to:

Neglect

Failure to provide adequate care, supervision, food, clothing, medical care or protection.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional ill-treatment affecting a child's development and wellbeing.

Physical Abuse

Deliberate physical injury or harm.

Sexual Abuse

Any sexual act imposed on a child, including online exploitation.

Particular vigilance is required for pupils with communication difficulties, intellectual disabilities and pupils dependent on adults for personal care.

7. Responding to Child Protection Concerns

Where concerns arise:

Staff Must:

1. Listen calmly and respectfully.
2. Reassure the child.
3. Avoid leading questions.
4. Record facts accurately.
5. Report immediately to the DLP.

DLP Responsibilities

The DLP shall:

- Assess the concern.
- Consult with Tusla if required.
- Submit a report to Tusla where reasonable grounds for concern exist.
- Maintain confidential records.
- Inform parents unless doing so places the child at further risk.

Emergency concerns may require immediate contact with Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

8. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

The school will:

- Maintain secure child protection records.
- Restrict access to authorised personnel only.
- Ensure GDPR-compliant storage and retention.
- Transfer appropriate records when pupils move schools in accordance with DEY guidance.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where child safety concerns arise.

9. Safeguarding Measures Specific to Special Schools

Recognising the nature of the school environment, particular safeguards apply in relation to:

Intimate Care

- Intimate care plans where required.
- Two-adult support where appropriate.
- Staff training.
- Recording of significant incidents.

Personal Care and Toileting

- Clear supervision arrangements.
- Accessible toilet facilities.
- Respect for privacy and dignity.

One-to-One Teaching

- Open-door practice where possible.
- Visibility panels in doors.
- Communication with colleagues regarding location.
- Appropriate supervision and oversight.

Behaviour Support and Restrictive Practices

- Behaviour support plans.
- CPI or Dynamis training.
- Restrictive practices used only where necessary, proportionate and recorded.

Community Access and Independence Programmes

- Individual risk assessments.
- Dynamic supervision.
- Safe community participation procedures.

10. Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

The school recognises online abuse as a safeguarding issue.

Measures include:

- Acceptable Use Policy.
 - Supervised internet access.
 - Cyberbullying prevention.
 - Filtering and monitoring systems.
 - Education in online safety and digital citizenship.
 - Safe use of photographs, video and social media.
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11. Recruitment and Vetting

The school follows all statutory vetting requirements.

This applies to:

- Teachers
- SNAs
- Administrative staff
- Bus escorts
- Coaches
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Student teachers
- Work-experience students where appropriate

No person may commence relevant work without appropriate vetting and safeguarding checks.

12. Visitors and Contractors

All visitors:

- Sign in and out.
- Wear identification where required.
- Follow school safeguarding procedures.
- Remain under appropriate supervision where necessary.

Contractors and external service providers must comply with school child safeguarding procedures.

13. Training

The Board of Management will ensure:

- DLP and DDLP training is maintained.
- Staff undertake Children First training.

- New staff receive induction training.
 - Refresher training is provided.
 - Records of all training are maintained.
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14. Anti-Bullying Measures

The school recognises that bullying can create significant safeguarding concerns.

The school implements:

- Anti-Bullying Policy.
 - Code of Behaviour.
 - Positive Behaviour Support.
 - Online Safety Procedures.
 - Restorative and educational approaches where appropriate.
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15. Child Protection Oversight

The Principal shall provide a Child Protection Oversight Report at each Board meeting in line with DEY procedures. Reports shall be anonymised and recorded appropriately.

16. Annual Review

The Board of Management will:

- Review the Child Safeguarding Statement annually.
 - Review the Risk Assessment annually.
 - Complete Department child protection review requirements.
 - Amend procedures following legislative or policy changes.
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17. School-Specific Child Safeguarding Risks

The Board identifies the following areas as requiring enhanced safeguarding oversight:

- Intimate care
- Toileting
- One-to-one teaching
- Behaviour support and restrictive practices
- Community access programmes
- Life skills training
- Independence training
- Public toileting
- School transport
- Work experience placements
- ICT use and online activity
- Recreational outings
- Sporting activities
- Integration with mainstream schools
- Visitors and volunteers
- After-school activities
- Student teachers and work experience students
- Support rooms and sensory spaces

Control measures are detailed in the school's Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment and associated policies.

Ratification

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel School on:

Date: _____

Signed:

Billy Murphy

Chairperson, Board of Management

Aisling Power

Principal / Secretary to the Board of Management

Appendix 1

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Our Lady of Good Counsel School

In accordance with Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015, the Board of Management has identified the following potential risks of harm and the procedures in place to manage those risks.

The Board has identified the following potential risks of harm to pupils while attending the school or participating in school activities and has put in place procedures to manage and reduce these risks.

Risk in this context means the risk of **harm** as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and not general health and safety risk.

School Activity / Area	Risk Level	Identified Risk of Harm	Control Measures / Procedures in Place
Staff Child Protection Training	High	Failure to recognise, respond to or report child protection concerns	Child Safeguarding Statement; annual review; DLP/DDLP training; Children First eLearning; staff induction; Child Protection Oversight Reports
One-to-one Teaching	High	Inappropriate conduct; allegations against staff	Open door policy where possible; visibility panels; staff awareness; supervision arrangements; record keeping
One-to-one Therapy Sessions	High	Harm to child; allegations against staff	Therapy protocols; parental consent; glass panels; observation where appropriate; safeguarding training

School Activity / Area	Risk Level	Identified Risk of Harm	Control Measures / Procedures in Place
Intimate Care	High	Boundary violations; inappropriate assistance	Intimate Care Policy; individual care plans; staff training; dignity and privacy procedures; recording of concerns
Toileting and Personal Hygiene Support	High	Inappropriate interaction; abuse allegations	Supervision procedures; intimate care plans; staff training; use of accessible facilities
Public Toileting During Community Outings	High	Harm from members of the public; inappropriate behaviour	Risk assessments; two staff where appropriate; accessible facilities preferred; supervision procedures
Manual Handling and Physical Support	High	Inappropriate physical contact	Manual handling training; individual student plans; recording of incidents
Administration of Medication	Medium	Medication errors; neglect of medical needs	Medication Policy; staff training; medication logs; parental consent
First Aid	Medium	Inappropriate contact; unmet medical needs	First Aid training; records maintained; supervision procedures
Behaviour Support Interventions	High	Injury; inappropriate restrictive practice	Behaviour Support Policy; MAPA/Team Teach training; recording and review of incidents

School Activity / Area	Risk Level	Identified Risk of Harm	Control Measures / Procedures in Place
Restrictive Practices	High	Physical or emotional harm	Restrictive Practice Policy; multidisciplinary review; parental consultation; monitoring and oversight
Classroom Teaching	Low	Harm by staff or pupils	Supervision; Code of Behaviour; positive behaviour supports
Support Rooms / Sensory Rooms	High	Isolation from supervision; inappropriate behaviour	Staff supervision; door visibility; monitoring procedures
Life Skills Training	High	Exposure to risks in public settings	Individual risk assessments; staff supervision; travel training procedures
Independence Training	High	Vulnerability in community settings	Community access protocols; communication devices; supervision
Integration Visits to Other Schools	Medium	Bullying; peer abuse; inadequate supervision	Risk assessments; supervision plans; liaison with host schools
Community-Based Learning	High	Harm from members of the public	Risk assessments; staff supervision; emergency contact procedures

School Activity / Area	Risk Level	Identified Risk of Harm	Control Measures / Procedures in Place
School Transport	Medium	Harm by adults or pupils; inadequate supervision	Bus Escort Policy; vetting; communication systems; reporting procedures
Bus Escorts	Medium	Inappropriate conduct	Vetting; safeguarding training; supervision
Arrival and Dismissal	Medium	Unauthorised collection; absconding	Supervision; collection procedures; sign-in/sign-out systems
Break Times and Yard Supervision	High	Bullying; injury; peer abuse	Yard rota; supervision policy; incident recording
Lunchtime Supervision	Medium	Isolation; reduced supervision	Defined supervision arrangements; deployment of staff
School Tours	High	Missing child; harm in unfamiliar environments	Tour policy; risk assessments; emergency contacts; staffing ratios
Overnight Trips (if applicable)	High	Increased vulnerability	Separate accommodation procedures; parental consent; supervision plans
Sports Activities	Medium	Bullying; inappropriate conduct	Sports supervision; codes of conduct; vetting of coaches

School Activity / Area	Risk Level	Identified Risk of Harm	Control Measures / Procedures in Place
School Discos and Social Events	Medium	Bullying; inappropriate contact	Supervision plans; visitor management; risk assessments
Christmas Concerts and School Performances	Medium	Unauthorised photography; access by visitors	Visitor protocols; photography policy
Fundraising Activities	Low	Inappropriate contact by public	Supervision; risk assessments
Visiting Speakers	Medium	Inappropriate content or behaviour	Prior approval; staff supervision; visitor policy
Volunteers in School	Medium	Unsuitable access to pupils	Vetting where required; supervision; Code of Conduct
Parents Supporting Activities	Medium	Inappropriate access to pupils	Supervision; safeguarding expectations communicated
Contractors on Site	Medium	Unsupervised access to children	Visitor sign-in; identification; supervision arrangements
Student Teachers	Medium	Inexperience regarding safeguarding obligations	Induction; supervision; child protection information

School Activity / Area	Risk Level	Identified Risk of Harm	Control Measures / Procedures in Place
Work Experience Students	Medium	Inappropriate interaction with pupils	Supervision; safeguarding briefing; protocols
After-School Activities	Medium	Reduced supervision; access by external personnel	Supervision policy; safeguarding requirements
Letting of Premises	Medium	Harm by external groups	Written agreements; safeguarding compliance requirements
Use of ICT by Pupils	High	Cyberbullying; online grooming; exposure to inappropriate content	Acceptable Use Policy; monitoring; internet filtering; online safety education
Use of AI Tools and Online Platforms	High	Access to inappropriate material; sharing of personal information	Staff oversight; online safety procedures; GDPR compliance
Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Devices	Medium	Cyberbullying; unauthorised recording	Mobile Phone Policy; acceptable use guidelines
Photography and Video Recording	Medium	Misuse of images	Photography Policy; parental consent; secure storage

School Activity / Area	Risk Level	Identified Risk of Harm	Control Measures / Procedures in Place
Social Media Use	High	Online harassment; reputational harm; boundary issues	Social Media Policy; staff guidance; pupil education
Online Learning Platforms	Medium	Unsupervised communication	School-approved platforms; monitoring procedures
Communication with Parents Electronically	Medium	Data protection or safeguarding concerns	Approved communication systems; record retention
Care of Pupils with Complex Medical Needs	High	Failure to protect vulnerable pupils	Healthcare plans; staff training; multidisciplinary support
Pupils With Limited Verbal Communication	High	Abuse not disclosed or recognised	Communication supports; staff vigilance; safeguarding monitoring
Pupils in Care	High	Increased vulnerability	Liaison with Tusla and relevant agencies; support planning
Pupils on Child Protection / Welfare Plans	High	Failure to implement supports	Multi-agency cooperation; secure records; regular review
Pupils from Minority Communities	Medium	Discrimination or exclusion	Equality policy; Anti-Bullying Policy

School Activity / Area	Risk Level	Identified Risk of Harm	Control Measures / Procedures in Place
LGBTQ+ Pupils or Pupils Perceived to be LGBTQ+	Medium	Bullying or victimisation	Inclusion procedures; Anti-Bullying Policy
New Staff Recruitment	High	Unsuitable person employed	Garda Vetting; reference checks; recruitment procedures
Agency Staff and Substitute Staff	High	Insufficient safeguarding awareness	Vetting confirmation; induction; supervision
Staff Conduct	High	Boundary violations; inappropriate behaviour	Staff Code of Conduct; safeguarding training
Allegations Against School Personnel	High	Failure to follow procedures	Child Protection Procedures; Chapter 9 reporting process; Board oversight
Record Keeping	High	Loss of safeguarding information	Secure storage; restricted access; GDPR compliance
Absconding from School or Activities	High	Child exposed to danger	Absconding Policy; risk assessments; emergency procedures
Physical Intervention in Crisis Situations	High	Injury or trauma	Approved training; recording and review systems

School Activity / Area	Risk Level	Identified Risk of Harm	Control Measures / Procedures in Place
Emergency Evacuation or Lockdown	Medium	Child becoming separated or distressed	Emergency response procedures; regular drills

Additional School-Specific Safeguarding Priorities for Our Lady of Good Counsel School

The Board recognises that the following areas require ongoing monitoring due to the profile of pupils attending the school:

- Intimate care and personal assistance.
- Toileting and changing procedures.
- Use of restrictive practices.
- Community access programmes.
- Independence and life-skills training.
- Public transport and school transport.
- Pupils with limited communication skills.
- Pupils with complex medical needs.
- Online safety and digital safeguarding.
- Managing allegations against personnel.
- Safe recruitment and vetting.
- Student dignity, privacy and bodily autonomy.

This risk assessment should be reviewed annually alongside the Child Safeguarding Statement, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Support Policy, Intimate Care Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, and Health and Safety Statement.

Additional Risks Relevant to a Special School Setting

The Board of Management recognises that pupils attending a special school may present additional safeguarding vulnerabilities arising from:

- Communication difficulties.
- Dependency on adults for personal care.
- Complex medical needs.
- Behavioural and emotional regulation difficulties.
- Increased need for physical support and intervention.
- Participation in community access and independence programmes.
- Increased risk of online exploitation.
- Difficulty recognising unsafe situations or reporting concerns.

Specific policies and procedures have been developed to address these additional risks and are reviewed annually.

Monitoring and Review

The Board of Management will:

- Review this Risk Assessment annually.
 - Review the assessment following any serious incident or safeguarding concern.
 - Update procedures where new risks emerge.
 - Ensure that all safeguarding measures remain effective and proportionate to the needs of pupils.
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Signed

Billy Murphy

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Aisling Power

Principal / Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: _____