

Child Safeguarding Statement

Addendum #1: Child Protection & COVID-19

This addendum sets out changes to the Child Safeguarding Statement in light of COVID-19, and should be read in conjunction with that Statement. Unless explicitly stated herewith, the usual provisions of the Child Safeguarding Statement shall continue to apply.

This addendum will be kept under review and is subject to change in response to any new or updated guidance published by Government and/or Public Health authorities.

In this addendum, where reference is made to measures to protect students who are at home, this means those who are learning at home for reasons to do with COVID-19, for example due to clinical and/or Public Health advice such as a local lockdown, or in the event of a student's need to restrict movement or self-isolate.

In this addendum, where reference is made to vulnerable children, this includes but is not limited to students who:

- Are receiving the support of social services / Child & Family Agency (TUSLA)
- Are the subject of existing school Child Protection files
- Have been identified by the school as being in need of additional care and support
- Have a confirmed SEN and for whom the school currently has an IEP
- Are acting in a caring capacity for a member of their household

Duty of Care: The school maintains its duty of care in respect of all students whether they are learning on site or online. When students are learning remotely, the core safeguarding principles set out in the Child Safeguarding Statement continue to apply, and children should be afforded the same levels of protection in such circumstances. All staff and volunteers must continue to act immediately on any concerns they have about a child. It is vitally important to do this, both for children at school and those learning at home. Where a staff member has reasonable grounds for concern in respect of a student attending classes online, such a staff member is mandated to report same and standard reporting procedures apply in such circumstances.

Attendance: Where students must access online learning, such students will be expected to attend classes unless a verifiable reason applies (for example being unable to attend because of sickness, being unable to attend because of clinical and/or Public Health advice etc). Where any student expected to attend classes online is absent from same, Year Heads and/or management will follow up on extended and/or unexplained periods of absence with parents or guardians.

Bullying Concerns: Where a class / year group / entire student population is required to access classes online, the school's Anti-Bullying Policy will apply in respect of all students concerned. Staff shall continue to act immediately on any peer to peer concerns, in respect of students learning at home and those learning on site. The Student Code of Conduct and COVID-19 Code of Conduct shall apply.

Staff-to-Student Communication: The school will maintain contact with students who are at home. Staff will endeavour to communicate directly with students at home to help identify any concerns. When on site, staff will use school phones and devices to make calls home

and Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms for all video calls. Provisions set out under the Staff Code of Conduct, Student Code of Conduct, COVID-19 Code of Conduct and AUP policy shall apply in these circumstances. Some indicators giving grounds for concern may include but are not limited to:

- Students not completing assigned work or logging on to online classes
- No contact from children or families
- Students presenting as more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls

Online Safety: All staff have been instructed on safe procedures for remote learning including pre-recording classes / videos to share, making video calls or phoning students. Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following reporting procedures as set out in the Child Safeguarding Statement. Staff will ensure students know how to report any concerns they have back to the school, and will signpost students to other sources of support both in school and externally. The school will ensure that parents and guardians:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what the school is asking students to do online, where relevant, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from the school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the teaching and resources the school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

Mental Health & Wellbeing: Staff will be aware of the possible effects that periods of remote learning may have students' mental health and wellbeing. They will look out for behavioural signs in all students and in vulnerable children in particular, including students being fearful, anxious, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional etc. to help identify where additional support may be needed. Where possible, the school will continue to offer the current support for student mental health for all students both on site and online. The school will also signpost all students, parents/guardians and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time. When setting expectations for students learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health. Staff will be alert to mental health concerns in children who are at home, and act on these immediately, following reporting procedures as set out the school's Counselling Policy.

Signed:



Stewart Bourke, Chairperson



Ronan Walsh, Head of School