

## **Child Safeguarding Statement**

Athea National School is a primary school providing -primary education to pupils from pre-school to Sixth Class. This includes three Special Classes.

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 2017](#) and [Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements](#), the Board of Management of Athea National School 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 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement
- 2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Margaret Watters (Principal)
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Maura Mulvihill (Deputy Principal)
- 4 The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, procedures, practices and activities In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school 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 of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

- 5 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 school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the DE website.
  - In relation to the selection or 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 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 the DE website.

- 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 school-
    - 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's 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 2017, 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" (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the child safeguarding statement.
  - 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's procedures for managing those risks is attached as an appendix to this statement.
  - The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school's website, the DE website or will be made available on request by the school.
- 6 This statement has been published on the school's 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.
- 7 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 20/10/21.

Signed: *Marie Gleeson*

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 20/10/21

Signed: *Margaret Watters*

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 20/10/21

## **Distance Learning Child Safeguarding Statement**

Athea National School is committed to a child-centred approach in all our work with children. We undertake to provide a safe environment and experience, where the welfare of the child is paramount.

This policy extends the Child Protection Policy of Athea National School. A copy of the school's Child Protection Policy and Statement is available:

To download at: [www.atheans.ie](http://www.atheans.ie)

On request: By emailing [atheans.ias@eircom.net](mailto:atheans.ias@eircom.net)

By writing to: Athea National School, Athea, Limerick

### **Distance Learning**

In facilitating access to safe communication between Athea National School staff and pupils, Athea National School extends the opportunity to learn via SeeSaw. In providing these opportunities, we commit to adhering to the following best practices in the interest of safeguarding both students and staff.

### **Child Protection Concerns Related to Distance Learning**

Communicating with students over the internet raises the following concerns in relation to child protection:

- The situation introduces the student to the idea of communicating with an adult that is not part of their family group over the internet. This is not a practice that should come to be considered normal by the student and it should be emphasised by parents that communicating in this manner is something that requires permission and supervision;
- This method of communication invites the teacher/SNA into the student's home, and vice versa, without being physically present and, therefore, possibly unknown to other members of either household. There should be an awareness on behalf of all involved that there is someone virtually present in their home and that everyone's actions need to be reflected in this.
- Athea National School staff undertake as part of our Child Protection Policy to report any concerns over child welfare to Margaret Watters (Principal), who is the Designated Liaison Person or in her absence to Maura Mulvihill (Deputy Principal and Deputy Designated Liaison Person).

### **Parental Consent**

*Written parental consent shall be sought for the purposes of:*

- Engaging with the pupil in their home via live video calls (Google Meet/Zoom)
- Parental consent will be sought using consent forms.

## **Location and Supervision of Lessons**

- All calls should be held in an area of the home that is open and accessible to the parents of the student. Lessons should not, for instance, take place in a room with a closed door without parental/guardian's supervision.
- Teachers/SNA should hold the video call in a location that respects the privacy of the pupils learning.
- Lessons will, however, need to be held in an area where student and staff members can concentrate on the call and not be unnecessarily interrupted. This may be hard to balance with younger children in the house and may take a few sessions to establish a good routine. All concerned need to show some patience in forming a routine and be willing to discuss ways to improve concentration during
- All one-to-one calls require a parent/guardian to be present during the video.
- For all one-to-one calls there will be two staff members on the video call.
- Parents are responsible for the supervision of their child during the video call.
- No lessons are permitted to be recorded by any pupils
- If a class teacher wishes to record a lesson online prior consent will be sought from parents.

## **Time Keeping**

- All parties will login on time for a video call.
- If any party is delayed or unable to attend video-call they should make prior contact to discuss with other party where possible.
- Staff will end non-attended calls 10 minutes after start time.

## **Alternative Contact Methods**

- All arrangements / re-arrangements to lessons must be made through a parent and teacher using email or phone call.
- Students and staff members are only allowed to communicate using SeeSaw or e-mail.

## **Seesaw Communication**

- Seesaw may be used for all other classes to engage in school activities.
- Teachers/SNAs will respond to messages during school hours. Any messages received after these hours will be responded to the following school day.
- Pupils may request help or clarifications using this method of communication.
- Pupils may submit schoolwork via Seesaw.
- Teachers will provide feedback to pupil via Seesaw.
- If parents wish to raise any concerns or discuss anything with teacher/SNA they must use the school email or request that the teacher phone them to discuss the issues.

## **Boundaries Professional Distance**

While encouraging and fostering a positive relationship with learners, all Athea National School staff must retain a sense of themselves as ‘professionals’ and, thus, maintain a professional distance with learners and parents in both the workplace and while working with pupils on Zoom or Seesaw. Staff members should ensure that they do not place themselves in situations where learners have undue expectations of a staff member’s ability to resolve conflicts or personal issues. Pupils and parents themselves have a responsibility to recognise the ‘professional’ nature of their relationship with a staff member and hence not hold undue expectations of how staff should relate to them in the workplace or online.

## **Grounds for Concern**

The grounds for concern laid out in the Athea National School Child Protection Policy shall apply in all lessons given over the internet and shall apply to all children in the student’s home. If a staff member witnesses any concerning issues during the videocall they must report these to Designated Liaison Person in accordance with the Child Protection Guidelines. This includes things that happen in the background or off-camera.

If a parent has any concerns about the process or relationship between student and staff member, they should contact Margaret Watters, the Designated Liaison Person to discuss the situation. Athea National School undertakes to investigate all complaints or concerns regarding its teaching staff in line with our Child Protection Policy.

## **Raising Concerns**

Concerns for the welfare of students will be dealt with in line with the Athea National School Child Protection Policy.

## **Recording of Lessons**

- No recordings are to be made of lessons, without the explicit consent of both teacher and parent/guardian.

## **Record Keeping**

- Teacher will share an agenda with pupils prior to the Zoom call
- Teacher will make a record of each call
- Details:
  - o Time & Date
  - o Consent received
  - o Location
  - o Attendees
  - o Duration
  - o Topics discussed
  - o Any concerns

## General Code of Conduct

All participants in Distance Learning must agree to:

- Treat all users, educators and colleagues fairly and equally. Stimulate conversation, be respectful of others' views, and refrain from personal
- Respect the legitimate intellectual property rights, do not plagiarise work, and give credit to the originators of ideas.
- Not share the posts of others

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Athea National School in March 2018. It was reviewed and updated on 01/09/20 on 20/10/21.

Signed: *Marie Gleeson*

Signed: *Margaret Watters*

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 20/10/21

Date: 20/10/21