



Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment 2022/23

Child Safeguarding Statement

Blessington Educate Together is a primary school providing primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

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 Blessington Educate Together 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
Jonathan Kinsella
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is
Lynn Steed
- 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 DES 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 DES and available on the DES 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 abovenamed DLP as the "relevant person" (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the school's 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 included with the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school's website, the DES 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.

- 6 This statement has been published on the school's website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parents' Association (if any) 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 the 14th of October 2021

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on the 14th of October 2021

Signed: *Yvonne Power*
 Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *Gaithan Kimola*
 Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 17th November 2022

Date: 17th November 2022

Written Assessment of Risk of Blessington Educate Together NS

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirement of Chapter 8 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of Blessington Educate Together NS.

School Activities

- Daily activities to educate the children in line with the National Curriculum. Lessons are conducted through whole class teaching, team teaching (i.e., 2 or more adults co-teaching a class), small group and station teaching (i.e., 1 adult and 4-6 children) and withdrawal teaching (i.e., small groups of children or individual children receiving additional instruction with a support teacher outside of the main classroom).
- Provision of education to children with a wide array of special educational needs, including intimate care, behavioural, intellectual and academic needs.
- Care of pupils with specific vulnerabilities/needs such as pupils from ethnic minorities, members of the Traveller community, LGBT children, pupils of minority faiths, children in care, children on CPNS (Child Protection Notification System).
- Full implementation of SPHE curriculum, to include Stay Safe and RSE programmes.
- Arrival and dismissal of pupils, including the use of school transport (bus escorts) and daily recreation/movement breaks for pupils both indoors and outdoors on the school grounds.
- Visitors to the school, for example parent-guardians, professional agencies, to enhance the education and experiences of the children.
- Recruitment of school personnel including: teachers, SNAs, Caretaker/Secretary/Cleaners, coaches, tutors, guest speakers, parental volunteers etc
- Use of ICT during the school day.
- Facilitating school placements for work experience, teacher training placement and SNA placements
- School-based activities off campus, e.g., swimming lessons, participation in sports leagues with other schools, school tours and educational excursions
- After-school clubs run on the school premises both with school staff and independent businesses e.g., drama, art, music, various sports, religious instruction
- Engagement with representatives of local initiatives
- School events, e.g., Sports Day, Seachtain na Gaeilge, open evenings

Risk of Harm	Procedures to Address the Risk of Harm Identified
<p>School-based bullying, verbal, physical or psychological</p> <p>See: Anti-Bullying Policy SPHE Policy RSE Policy Supervision Policy Behaviour Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil and staff check-ins to promote a culture of kindness and respect • Programmes to support children experiencing difficulties regulating emotions or anxiety. • Anti-bullying procedures clearly laid out to staff, parents, and pupils to inform adults and pupils as to the steps to be followed • Anti-bullying policy is reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management annually • Anti-bullying policy on our school website to inform parents • Adequate supervision is provided to ensure codes are being followed. • The school Anti-bullying programme is supported by the planning and teaching of SPHE, RSE and the Stay Safe Programmes.
<p>Interaction with visitors to the school</p> <p>Code of Conduct for Parents/Visitors Policy Garda Vetting Policy Parental Involvement Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates to the school are closed at 9.15 am until 1.30pm • Visitors must check-in with the secretary or principal on arrival. • Regular visitors to the school, e.g. external teachers, after-school club facilitators, guest speakers, are Garda Vetted or a copy of their Garda vetting is provided to the school. • Persons administering external programmes (e.g. GAA) through another body will provide the school with a copy of their Garda vetting and any appropriate insurance applicable • Children are closely supervised by staff members during all school events in which visitors are invited into the school, e.g. Sport's Day, School Performances • Students in the school on teaching placement will be mentored by the class teacher in the class they are doing their placement in to receive support throughout their time in the school. Student teachers/colleges will provide school with necessary vetting and insurance details. • Students in the school on work placement, e.g., SNA placement, will be allocated a staff mentor and will not be responsible for the teaching of the children.
<p>School events held outside the school grounds, e.g. school tours, swimming lessons, sport's events, concerts, etc.</p> <p>Code of Conduct for Parents/Visitors Policy Parental Involvement Policy Supervision Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk assessment will be completed before each school tour or trip. • Children will be closely supervised by a teacher and SNA (if allocated to class) when utilising the outdoor classroom. • All school volunteers are vetted for school tours, swimming, outings etc. • Pupil-teacher ratio is reduced for school tours to maximise the supervision of children. Pupils are closely supervised by staff when transitioning from one area to another (e.g., going to the toilets, going to and from the bus) and when interacting with staff and/or volunteers from the establishment they are visiting. • Changing rooms are closely supervised by staff when in use by children e.g., at swimming lessons and sports events. • Parental consent is provided upon enrolment for children to leave the school grounds to attend any events.

<p>After-school clubs: drop-off, staff, collection</p> <p>See: Supervision Policy Garda Vetting Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-off: Children are lined up by their class teacher and handed over directly to the after-school teacher. - Internal staff: Teachers are given a list of children's names and the names of adults who can collect them - External staff: External staff provide the school with copies of their insurance, Garda Vetting, child safeguarding statement etc and implement their own collection policy.
<p>Hand-over of children to responsible adult at collection time</p> <p>See: Garda Vetting Policy Supervision Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names and contact numbers of adults who have permission to collect each child are provided by parents at the beginning of each year and stored on our school online database • If an unknown adult comes to collect a child (e.g., a family friend, an aunt/uncle, a cousin, etc.) and the school has not been informed beforehand by parents, the class teacher will call the parents to confirm the child has permission to go with that adult. • Children are lined up at an agreed collection point and released to their parents/guardians one by one • If an adult appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they come to collect a child from school, they are not released by the class teacher. This would then be reported to the DLP or DDLP immediately. • Parent/guardians must notify the school if a child is walking/cycling home.
<p>Storage or publication of photos of children</p> <p>See: Internet Use Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written parental permission to take photos of children is obtained by the school upon enrolment. • Class teachers are made aware of any children in his or her class who do not have permission to be in school photos via the school data base • Photos are stored securely on the school online storage space. • Children names are not published with photos uploaded to the school website or social media such Facebook. • Children are not permitted to use personal electronic devices (e.g., iPads, cameras, personal devices) on the school grounds at any time.
<p>Withdrawal of children from class / yard</p> <p>See: SEN Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doors remain open during withdrawal. • Parents are informed and provide written consent if children are withdrawn from class on a regular basis, e.g., for continuum of support or movement breaks. • If a teacher withdraws a child to investigate an incident, (speaks with him/her one-to-one or in a small group setting) it must be within listening space of another adult, with doors open. • If a teacher withdraws a child and sends him/her to principal's office, the child is accompanied by class teacher or relevant adult. Principal implements Code of Behaviour.
<p>Toileting</p> <p>See: Intimate Care Policy SNA Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The door remains open if a child is assisted with toileting and only one adult is available. • Where able, children change themselves while an adult i.e SNA supports at the door. • Toileting incidents are recorded on Aladdin.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who need to use the toilet during yard time should only do so in exceptional circumstances. Children are encouraged to go to the toilet prior to yard time. When necessary, children must inform an adult that they are going to the toilet and advise the same teacher of their return. • The schools Intimate Care policy is provided to all SNAs, relevant teachers, their parents and is available to all parents on request.
<p>Lack of healthy lunch or insufficient lunch</p> <p>See: Healthy Eating Policy Child Protection Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers monitor children's lunches and ensure that all children are provided with a sufficient quantity of healthy food each day. • If a child is not provided with any lunch in school, the school phones the parents and asks them to bring the lunch to school. If a lunch is not provided the DLP or DDLP will be informed immediately, and best efforts made to ensure the child is adequately fed throughout the day. • If a child is provided with insufficient lunch the class teacher discusses it with the parents in the first instance. • If a child regularly has no lunch or insufficient lunch and the situation did not improve after speaking with the parents, the class teacher informs the DLP or DDLP
<p>Data protection</p> <p>See: Data protection (GDPR) Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential documents relating to children in the school are stored securely in the school: o - Hard copies are stored in locked filing cabinets in the secretary/principal's office and in support teachers' classrooms - Soft copies are stored in a secure online database. A password is required to access the documents. • Documents are shared with staff on a need-to-know basis. • Parental permission for transfer of information (i.e., between school staff, between the school and previous/prospective schools, between the school and other professionals) is obtained in each instance.
<p>Children presenting with social, emotional, behavioural, or medical needs in school</p> <p>See: SEN Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns relating to social, emotional, behavioural, or medical needs are communicated to parents by phone, at collection time or through formal meetings. • Children are provided with additional support in school through the model of the Continuum of Support. This may be in the form of in-class support or withdrawal from class. Staff discuss concerns and learning targets with parents and formulate a written plan, signed by the parents. Learning targets are regularly monitored to track progress. • An individual support plan will be completed for children with additional vulnerabilities to ensure extra supports are in place within the school environment as required. The specific strategies outlined in this care plan will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the needs and supports identified are current and appropriate. • The school may recommend onward referral (e.g. to the Primary Care Team, the School Age Disability Team, EIT, AON, NEPS, GP or CAMHS) for children presenting with significant difficulties. The school supports parents/guardians to submit relevant referral forms. • Significant concerns are raised with the DLP or DDLP.

<p>Children presenting with medical needs in school</p> <p>See: Accident, Injury and Administration of Medicine Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Administration of Medication Policy will be implemented in the event that a child requires medication throughout the school day. • Parent/Guardians must complete the relevant forms and put a request in writing to the board. • Medical needs are logged on Aladdin.
<p>Late drop-offs, early collection, late pick up, attendance</p> <p>See: Attendance Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children arriving late to school will be marked 'Late' in the class attendance record by their teacher. Their time of arrival / number of minutes late will be logged. • The school discusses punctuality with parents if children are regularly late. • Parents are regularly informed via email / school report of punctuality and also at parent teacher meetings. • Children's attendance at school will be monitored with parents encouraged to input a reason for absence by mailing the class teacher. Communication will be made with parents in instances of regular unexplained absences, with a record of any discussion stored securely on the school system. • Parents are regularly informed of attendance and also at parent teacher meetings. • Parents receive a letter when a child has missed 15 days of school. • Tusla are automatically notified when a child misses 20 or more days from school. • Significant attendance concerns are reported to the Education Welfare Officer. • Teachers must be informed in advance if children are to be collected early from school. • If a parent is going to be late to collect their child, they should let the school know. • If child is collected more than 10 minutes late, and school not contacted parents/guardians are phoned.
<p>Exposure to inappropriate online content</p> <p>See: Internet Use Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of electronic devices in school in guided by the school Internet Use Policy. • Use of school electronic devices, e.g Tablets, laptops, is monitored and supervised by adults. • School internet is provided by PDST Technology in Education which is monitored for inappropriate content and unsuitable websites blocked.
<p>The school site is utilised by other services with the approval of the Board of Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other services, such as afterschool clubs, utilising the school premises shall be responsible for the review and implementation of their own Child Safeguarding Policy and supporting documents and provide the school with a copy of same. • Any concerns relating to these services shall be raised immediately with the DLP or DDLP.
<p>Accidents and injuries on site</p> <p>See: Accident, Injury and Administration of Medicine Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidents and injuries that occur on the premises shall be managed in accordance with the Accident and Injury Policy. This includes the administration of first aid where required. • This policy will be discussed with all staff at induction day and at any other point required. • A copy of this policy is accessible on the school website.

<p>School transport arrangements including use of bus escorts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education provide school bus through Bus Éireann for specialised classes and for some children in mainstream. • Bus Éireann ensures all bus drivers are vetted and inform Department of Education of same. School request Garda Vetting confirmation annually. • All bus escorts are vetted through the school. • A bus escort accompanies children on the bus with pupils at all times. • Bus Driver and escort ensure children are released to a known adult at all times. • If a concern arises on the bus, the bus escort and/or bus driver reports concern to DLP / DDLP.
<p>Sporting Activities including annual Sports Day See: Code of Conduct for Parents/Visitors policy Accident, Injury and Administration of Medicine Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Day activities on-site are organised by staff members. A breakdown of structure and activities are shared with staff in advance. • Staff move with pupils during sports day to ensure their safety throughout activities, particularly supporting those children with additional needs. • Pupils remain the responsibility of their class teacher for the duration of the school day.
<p>Use of outdoor classroom/learning spaces See: Code of Conduct of Visitors/Parents Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor classroom/learning spaces is a daily part of school life. • Use of Outdoor classroom/learning spaces is timetabled. • Staff must ensure adequate supervision of pupils at all times. • Staff are aware of the increased risk of visitors. • Toileting protocols as detailed above are implemented during the use of outdoor classroom/learning spaces.
<p>Recreation breaks for pupils /Classroom teaching See: Supervision Policy SNA Policy Accident, Injury and Administration of Medicine Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six staff (four SNAs and two teachers) supervise yard time daily. • Staff are allocated some children with additional needs while two staff members supervise general areas at the front and back of the grounds. • Staff are aware of the location of the first-aid box (in Jonathan' office) • In the event that the yard is unsuitable for use (e.g., due to rain or ice), children are to remain in their classroom and are supervised by staff. • The staff members responsible for yard duty on that day will be responsible for the supervision of the children in their classrooms.

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 2017*

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.

This risk assessment was ratified by the Board of Management on 17th November 2022. It be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the full annual review of Child Protection documents.

Signed: 
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 17th November 2022

Signed: 
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 17th November 2022