

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

- 1. St. John of God Community Services clg**
- 2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm**

St. John of God Community Services clg provides services and supports to children 0 – 18 years of age with a mild, moderate and severe to profound intellectual disability and children and adolescents with mental health needs. Services provided to children include Early Intervention, Education, Respite and Outpatient Services.

St. John of God Community Services clg provides services and supports to children and adolescents with intellectual disability at Dublin South East Services, CHO 6, Liffey Services CHO 7, Kerry Services and North East Services. Services and supports are provided to children and adolescents with moderate to severe mental health difficulties at St. John of God Community Mental Health Services, Lucena Clinics CHO 6 and 7.

The Board of Community Services acknowledges that all children have the right to be safe and to live a life free from harm. The welfare of children is of paramount importance and all children have the right to be protected. Reporting of child protection and welfare concerns in relation to children is mandatory. Staff and services are supported and equipped to prevent harm to children through its practices and procedures. Risk assessment will mitigate the potential risk and where harm occurs immediate intervention will address the situation and prevent it from escalating.

All staff have a duty of care to report child protection concerns relating to any child to Tusla Child and Family Agency and report to their Line Manager directly. Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons, appropriately trained are appointed in each Regional Services as a resource to staff and volunteers who may have a child protection concern.

It is mandatory for all staff to complete Children First E-Learning training and keep their certificates in date (renewable every 3 years).

The name and contact details of Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons are prominently displayed in each Service. A list of Mandated Persons is available in each Service.



The Board of Community Services and its Services will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare.

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations
- recognise that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- 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
- acknowledge that children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives.
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education and support of their children and
- acknowledge that Child protection is a multiagency, multidisciplinary activity. Agencies and professionals must work together in the interests of children.
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

3. Risk Assessment

We have carried out a risk assessment to identify any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services and this was updated on 25 March 2024. Below are a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1.	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg recognise that it has a range of people involved in the provision of services which include Staff Members, Volunteers, Trainees, Contractors, Members of Religious Congregations and Individuals supported aka service users and families, visitors and therefore who could theoretically pose a risk of harm to children.</p>	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg have in place Human Resource Policies and Procedures which include requirements in relation to Garda Vetting, Recruitment, Supervision, Training, Education and Induction. St. John of God Community Services clg have Programme Policies in place which relate to Risk Management and Assessment, Person-Centred Planning and Personal and Intimate Care Policy. St John of God Community Services clg adhere to the HSE Open Disclosure Policy.</p> <p>St John of God Community Services clg have in place an Oversight Children First Group which includes expert professionals in the area of Child Protection and Safeguarding from across the Regional Services who have a key role in reviewing the CSS and the risk assessments which inform it.</p>
2.	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg adhere to Children First Act 2015 and National Guidance 2017 which outlines the reporting of allegations. They also recognise that theoretically there may be a risk of harm to children when allegations are not reported or responded to appropriately as per the National Guidance and organisational policy and procedures. Retrospective Disclosures will be reported in the same manner to Tusla. St John of God Community Services clg also recognise the risk of harm due to a child not recognising or knowing how to report abuse or neglect.</p>	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg ensures that all Staff and Volunteers, Trainees working with Children complete education relating to Children First Legislation Act 2015 and National Guidance 2017. Children First is included as part of Induction for all newly appointed staff and Volunteers. All staff must complete the mandatory Children First E-Learning Programme which is valid for 3 years and outlines the role and responsibility to report all allegations and Child Protection concerns. It is the role of the staff member and line manager to ensure that all staff have up to date Children First Training</p> <p>St. John of God Community Services clg have Designated Liaison Persons and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons in place within each region as a resource to staff members</p> <p>St. John of God Community Services clg have in place an Oversight Children First Group which includes expert professionals in the area of Child Protection and Safeguarding from across the Regional Services who have a key role in reviewing the CSS and the risk assessments which inform it.</p>

<p>3.</p>	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg acknowledge that while they have a range of policies and procedures in place to safeguard children, a risk of harm may theoretically be present due to staff and or volunteers not implementing polices in line with best practice which may result in the use of inappropriate practices for example restrictive practices, or inappropriate administration of medication or procedures to manage absconding in St. John of God Community Services.</p> <p>Risk of harm due to inadequate support which includes supervision as per the child's need e.g. (Child's Care and Support Plan).</p> <p>Risk of harm to children due to inappropriate prescribing and monitoring of medication.</p>	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg have a range of policies and procedures to inform best practice across Children Intellectual and Mental Health Services to include Risk Management, Incident Management Policy and Assessment and Nurse Prescribing Policy.</p> <p>Within Intellectual Disability Services the following policies support the implementation of Children First Guidance; Person-Centred Approach Policy, Person-Centred Medicines Management Policy, Positive Behaviour Support Policy, Restraint Reduction Policy, Personal and Intimate Care & Equality and Human Rights Policies. A Local Procedure is in place relating to absconding incidents. Community Mental Health Services have an ADHD Treatment Framework implementation – March 2022 and Local Medication Management Policy.</p> <p>St. John of God Community Services clg have the following Human Resource policies in place; Supervision Policy, Performance Management Policy, Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff underpinned by Trust in Care (HSE 2005 Policy), Grievance and Disciplinary Policy & Violence Harassment and Aggression policy.</p> <p>St. John of God Community Services clg have in place an Oversight Children First Group which includes expert professionals in the area of Child Protection and Safeguarding from across the Regional Services who have a key role in reviewing the CSS and the risk assessments which inform it.</p>
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<p>4.</p>	<p>St. of God Community Services clg recognise the following potential Risks:</p> <p>A. Risk of harm to the developmental needs of children based on lack of access to necessary clinical input and all other resources to meet the child needs and family needs.</p> <p>B. Risk to a child where on occasion the services may engage or make a referral to an external agency, partners or sub-contractors for the purpose of providing a service to a child whom is deemed to be in the care of St. John of God Community Services and therefore, theoretically this may cause harm to the child should the external provider not be compliant with Children First Legislation Act 2015. and Children First National Guidance 2017.</p> <p>C. Risk of harm to an individual child who is supported by St. John of God Community Services and who avails of recommended treatment from an External Clinical Team that may contravenes our policies.</p>	<p>St. John of God Community Intellectual Disability Services have a Supports Policy, Risk Management Policy, Person-Centred Approach Policy, Restraint Reduction Policy in place to ensure appropriate referral and transitioning of children to external agencies. The completion of the Risk Assessment Process has identified that St. John of God Community Services clg policies and procedures have been reviewed to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and Children First National Guidance 2017. Monitoring is required to ensure compliance with policy and procedure.</p> <p>We engage collaboratively in the structures and processes available to us in each Region as part of the Joint Protocol for Interagency Collaboration Between the Health Service Executive and Tusla – Child and Family Agency to Promote the Best Interests of Children and Families.</p> <p>All children are provided with user friendly information on categories of abuse and what to do if they have a concern. An explanatory letter also provided to families regarding this support.</p> <p>St. John of God Community Services clg have in place an Oversight Children First Group which includes expert professionals in the area of Child Protection and Safeguarding from across the Regional Services who have a key role in reviewing the CSS and the risk assessments which inform it.</p>
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<p>5.</p>	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg recognise that they provide services in many locations both within the community and in campus-based services which is co- located with St. John of God Community Services, adult services. Given this, it recognises that a risk of harm to a child may theoretically arise where a member of the public or individuals utilising the non-children campus-based settings have access to a child who is unsupervised.</p> <p>St. John of God Community Services clg also recognise the potential risk of harm or abuse to a child who is visiting a Service and is not part of our Service.</p>	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg have in place a range of polices to safeguard children both within and external to their service location. These include individual risk assessments & management and procedures and policies relating to absconding for Intellectual Disability Services. All staff are educated on Children First Act 2015 and Guidance Document 2017 and organisational Child Protection and welfare policies and procedures.</p> <p>St. John of God Community Services clg have in place an Oversight Children First Group which includes expert professionals in the area of Child Protection and Safeguarding from across the Regional Services who have a key role in reviewing the CSS and the risk assessments which inform it.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg recognise the risk of harm to individuals due to access to online inappropriate/illegal material which may include explicit or violent content, access to ICT (e.g. social media and electronic contact) and risk of harm to a child from the use/ misuse of digital images/ unauthorised photography.</p>	<p>St. John of God Community Services clg have in place a range of polices to safeguard children within Service locations. These include individual risk assessments and management, Trust in Care Policy and policies relating to ICT usage. All staff have Contracts of employment which sets out their requirement to comply with appropriate behaviour and codes of practice. All Staff are educated on Children First Act 2015 and Guidance Document 2017 and organisational Child Protection and Welfare policies and procedures. All staff complete the E-learning Children First programme which is valid for 3 years.</p> <p>Each Regional Management Team will have robust risk assessment processes in place to ensure the safety of individuals supported accessing and using social media including use of online material as per Risk Assessment No 6.</p> <p>St. John of God Community Services clg have in place an Oversight Children First Group which includes expert professionals in the area of Child Protection and Safeguarding from across the Regional Services who play a key role in reviewing the CSS and the risk assessments which inform it.</p>

4. Risk Assessment Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- A.** Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service
- B.** Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children
- C.** Procedure for the provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm
- D.** Procedure for the reporting of child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla
- E.** Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
- F.** Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

All procedures listed are available on request.

5. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our Service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safety Statement will be reviewed 31 March 2026 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the Statement refers.



Signed: _____

Charles Watchorn

Chairperson

Board of St. John of God Community Services clg

Granada Stillorgan

Co Dublin

For queries, please contact; Clare Dempsey, CEO Community Services, Hospitaller House, Stillorgan, Co Dublin A94 X5K8. Clare.Dempsey@sjog.ie
(Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015)