



**NCCA**

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta  
Curáclain agus Measúnachta  
National Council for  
Curriculum and Assessment

# Child Protection and Safeguarding:

## Annual Review 2024

December 2024

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## Part 1: Child Protection and Safeguarding Annual Review

NCCA has committed to undertake an annual review of Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures to ensure that the statutory obligations under section 11(8) of the Children First Act 2015, are met.

The checklist below is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list of the issues to be considered. As part of the overall review process, NCCA will also assess relevant policies, procedures, practices and activities vis-a-vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the Child Safeguarding Statement and 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 (revised 2023) and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements.

The annual review is initiated by the Children First Working Group with each section carried out by each named group to illustrate the various roles/responsibilities assumed within NCCA for Child Protection.

Three sections of review:

1. Children First Working Group (pages 6 – 8)
2. Management Team (pages 8-9)
3. NCCA Council (pages 10– 11).

### Section One: Children First Working Group

1,	Has NCCA identified any aspects of the Child Safeguarding Statement and/or its implementation that require further improvement or amendment?	Yes
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	<p>In terms of implementation, NCCA has engaged with Tusla around training for staff over the last year. Two such sessions were held for all staff. Staff completed an e-learning module on Children First in advance of the sessions. Tusla has also advised on NCCA's Child Protection Safeguarding Statement. NCCA will maintain in contact with Tusla on a regular basis to ensure that training requirements are met, including for new staff, and also to ensure that Child Protection arrangements continue to fulfil statutory obligations.</p>	
2.	Has NCCA ensured that any areas for improvement that were identified in any previous review of the Child Safeguarding Statement have been adequately addressed?	Yes
3.	Has NCCA reviewed and updated where necessary the written assessment of risk as part of this overall review?	Yes
	<p>The following text is amended on p.19 as set out under the general heading <b>Procedures:</b></p> <p><i>'...the following procedures support the NCCA's commitment to safeguard children and young people with whom it engages'.</i></p> <p>In this revised text, the word 'commitment' replaces 'intention', and the phrase 'with whom it engages' replaces 'while they are availing of our service'.</p> <p>The following new bullet point is added on p.20, under the heading, <b>Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm:</b></p> <p><i>Annual in-person training for new staff or for staff who wish to avail of refresher training is organised with Tusla. Staff are required to complete a certified Tusla e-learning module on Children First prior to in-person training. NCCA also liaises with Tusla on its existing Child Protection and Safeguarding arrangements, and</i></p>	

	<p><i>disseminates resources provided by Tusla to all staff, to support their ongoing awareness.</i></p> <p><i>In the Risk Assessment section on p.19, it is clarified that NCCA's Data Protection Policy was last approved by Council in Q4, 2023</i></p>	
4.	Is there a process in place whereby any school/setting with whom we work has been provided with access to the Child Safeguarding Statement?	Yes
	<i>A letter has been developed to share with schools/settings in advance of visits/work which includes a link to the Child Safeguarding Statement</i>	
5.	Has NCCA ensured the Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed in a prominent place in main administration offices in Dublin and Portlaoise?	Yes
	<i>The Child Safeguarding Statement (including the names of the DLPs) is displayed at the main entrance to the administration offices in Dublin and Portlaoise.</i>	
6.	Has NCCA ensured that the Child Safeguarding Statement is available to the public?	Yes
	<i>The Child Safeguarding Statement is published in English and Irish on the NCCA website.</i>	
7.	Has training been planned and provided in Child Protection?	Yes
	<i>Two in-person training events took place for staff on 15 March and 11 April 2024, each facilitated by two representatives of Tusla. Staff completed a certified Tusla online training module on Children First in advance. A further session with Tusla is planned for early 2025 for new staff. Aside from this training, new staff will be acquainted with the NCCA Child Protection Statement as part of their induction, to ensure that there is no risk for young people, for staff and for NCCA on engagement with schools and settings.</i>	

8.	Have both DLPs attended available child protection training?	Yes
9.	Have both Deputy DLPs attended available child protection training?	Yes

## Section Two: Management Team

1	Is the NCCA Management Team satisfied with Section One of the Annual Review completed by the Children First Working Group in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding?	Yes
2	Are two DLPs and two Deputy DLPs currently appointed?	Yes
3	Is the Management Team satisfied that all NCCA staff have been made aware of their responsibilities under the Children First Act 2015 and <i>Children First Best Practice Guidance</i> ?	Yes
	<i>Two in-person training events took place for staff on 15 March and 11 April 2024, facilitated by Tusla. Staff completed a certified Tusla online training module on Children First in advance. A further session is planned for early 2025 for new staff.</i>	Satisfied that appropriate plans are in place.
4	Is the Management Team satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to Tusla/An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed in each case reviewed?	Yes

5	Are there records on file for relevant staff pertaining to Garda Vetting?	Yes
	<i>NCCA relies on a number of sources for Garda Vetting of relevant staff. A centralised system is used to store and record all relevant information regardless of its source.</i>	
6	Is the Management Team satisfied that there is a system to receive and record safely all notes pertaining to child protection concerns and reports made to Tusla?	Yes

### Section Three: NCCA Council

The table below sets out key questions for consideration by Council members at the December 2024 meeting. To assist discussion, draft responses are included which provide details on when and how certain activities are carried out supporting good practice in the organisation related to child protection. These draft responses will be updated on foot of Council's discussion.

1	Has the NCCA Council formally adopted a Child Safeguarding Statement in accordance the Children First Act 2015?	Yes
	<i>Council formally adopted the Child Safeguarding Statement in September 2019 and it was last reviewed by the Council at its meeting in September 2023.</i>	
2	Does NCCA's Child Safeguarding Statement include a written assessment of risk as required and defined under the Children First Act 2015?	Yes

3	Is Council satisfied with the Annual Review Section Two completed by the NCCA Management Team in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding?	Yes
4	Has Council received a Child Protection Report as <i>part</i> of the CEO report at each meeting held since the last review was undertaken?	Yes
	<i>This measure was introduced in 2020 and has been continued since then.</i>	
5	Has Council had the opportunity to provide feedback on Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures as part of the Annual review process?	Yes
	<i>There was discussion of procedures when the Child Safeguarding Statement was first approved at Council in 2019, and at subsequent meetings as part of the review of the Statement.</i>  <i>Council received a briefing on the revised Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2023) in November 2023.</i>	
6.	Does NCCA have a procedure in place to respond to child protection allegations made against NCCA staff?	Yes
	<i>NCCA uses the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours and the Civil Service Disciplinary Code which lay out the standards for those working in the Civil Service and how allegations of abuse or misconduct against employees should be managed.</i>	

Signed: Gerard O'Sullivan Date: 25/11/2024

## Member of Children First Working Group

Signed: Arlene Forster Date: xx/11/2024

## CEO, Management Team

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: XX/12/2024

## Chairperson, NCCA Council

## Part 2: Updated Child Safeguarding Statement

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is a statutory body of the Department of Education. The NCCA advises the Minister for Education on:

- curriculum and assessment for early childhood education, primary and post-primary schools
- assessment procedures used in schools and examinations on subjects which are part of the curriculum.

The NCCA is a representative structure, the membership of which is determined by the Minister. It has 26 members, all of whom are appointed for a four-year term. The members represent teachers, students, school managers, parents, business interests, trade unions, and other educational interests. Working in partnership is central to the work of the NCCA and advice is developed through research, deliberation, consultation and networks. The NCCA has a full-time executive staff, led by a Chief Executive, who engage in research and consultation with children and young people across early years, primary and post-primary education.

The NCCA is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people with whom the Council works. *The Children First Act (2015)* creates **statutory obligations** regarding child welfare and protection. The Act places specific obligations on organisations which provide services to children and young people. *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2018)* sets out the best practice (non-statutory) obligations which are in place for all individuals and for all sectors of society. **Statutory obligations under the Children First Act, (2015) operate side by side with the best practice (non-statutory) obligations.** In accordance with these requirements under the Children First Act (2015) and best practice obligations the NCCA has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

**NB:** The Department of Education Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023), have been considered as part of the review from 2023, and have informed the workings of the review.

## Guiding principles

- NCCA is committed to maintaining the highest standards of child safeguarding in line with relevant legislation and informed by best practice.
- NCCA is committed through its engagement with children and young people, to ensuring their safety, welfare and development as a core objective and priority.
- NCCA is committed to ensuring the confidentiality of child protection and safeguarding concerns.
- NCCA is committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who participates in activities involving NCCA staff and those contracted on behalf of the NCCA, including the right to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.
- NCCA is committed to providing staff with training in accordance with their needs, responsibilities and the purpose of their interaction with children and young people.
- NCCA will liaise with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare and fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection and safeguarding matters.
- In line with best practice under the Children First National Guidance, a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) with responsibility for the early childhood and primary and post-primary teams have been appointed.

Early Childhood and Primary Team

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Early Childhood and Primary is Patrick Sullivan

Contact Details: [patrick.sullivan@ncca.ie](mailto:patrick.sullivan@ncca.ie) / 087 9884896

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) for Early Childhood and Primary is Derek Grant

Contact details: [derek.grant@ncca.ie](mailto:derek.grant@ncca.ie) / 087 6038198

Post-primary Team

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Post-primary is Barry Slattery

Contact details: [barry.slattery@ncca.ie](mailto:barry.slattery@ncca.ie) / 087 2555086

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) for Post-primary is Ben Murray

Contact details: [ben.murray@ncca.ie](mailto:ben.murray@ncca.ie) / 087 2297263

## Risk assessment

This Child Safeguarding Statement is informed by a risk assessment which was carried out within the NCCA to identify any potential for harm to a child or young person through engagement in activities/events facilitated by NCCA staff for the purpose of supporting the development of curriculum and assessment. The risk assessment was carried out by the Children First Working Group, whose purpose is ongoing review and implementation of child protection and safeguarding procedures within NCCA. The membership includes the DLP from the Early Childhood and Primary Team, an Education Officer of the Early Childhood and Primary Team, the DLP from the Post-primary team, and an Education Officer from the Post-primary team. It has also been prepared in accordance with Section 11(1)(a) of the Children First Act 2015, which defines risk as *any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service.*

Section 2 of the Children First Act 2015 defines harm as follows: '*harm means in relation to a child – (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or, (b) sexual abuse of the child.*'

Table 1: Written Risk Assessment has a list of the areas of risk of harm identified and an outline of the procedures in place for managing these identified risks.

**Important Note:** This risk assessment notes the definition of 'harm' as set out in Chapter 4 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*.

**Table 1: Written Risk Assessment**

Risk identified	Procedures in place to manage identified risk
Risk of harm to a child, young person or vulnerable adult by NCCA staff during school visits or at events organised by NCCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCCA staff ensure there is always another adult present during research and consultation with children and young people.</li> <li>NCCA staff do not engage in one-to-one interaction with children/young people unless another adult is present. In the case of an early years setting, the other adult must be an early years' practitioner.</li> <li>Young people under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult to events organised by NCCA.</li> <li>NCCA Child Protection Liaison Officers with responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding will support children's welfare and wellbeing at NCCA organised events.</li> </ul>
Risk of harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults engaging in NCCA-led activities, particularly those with SEN or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written consent is sought from parents/guardians of children and young people under the age of 18 and from young people over the age of 18.</li> </ul>

<p>those who have particular vulnerabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A copy of the NCCA's Guiding Principles to safeguard children and young people from harm (page 1 Child Safeguarding Statement) is provided to all schools and settings where NCCA engages with children and young people</li> <li>• NCCA staff ensure that the wellbeing of the child or young person is paramount at all times.</li> <li>• Advance communication between the school and NCCA staff may support schools to prepare any additional supports that may be required by children and young people with SEN or additional vulnerabilities taking part.</li> <li>• Children and young people will be informed of their right to participate and their right to discontinue participation at any time, and NCCA staff will agree, in advance with the relevant school / organisation / parents, the procedure to facilitate this.</li> <li>• NCCA will carry out a risk assessment of the physical location or setting of events where children and young people are present.</li> </ul>
<p>Risk of harm to a child, young person or vulnerable adult from concerns not being noticed, supported and reported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training is provided through induction and on an ongoing basis for NCCA staff relative to their needs and level of contact with children and young people.</li> <li>• NCCA staff are expected to be familiar with information provided in Children First National Guidance on recognising abuse,</li> </ul>

	<p>dealing with disclosure and their responsibility to report.</p>
Risk of harm from identification of a child, young person or vulnerable adult in published work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCCA anonymises published work involving children and young people by ensuring that their names are redacted.</li><li>• NCCA takes steps to limit risk associated with publication of photographs of children and young people. The names of children and young people and their school / setting are not identifiable. No identifiable features such as a school crest are visible in photographs.</li><li>• NCCA also uses a two-step process involving two different colleagues to ensure that identifiable features/information is removed prior to publication.</li><li>• Any personal details gathered as part of consent are stored securely as per the NCCA's Data Protection Policy (last approved by Council in Q4, 2023)</li></ul>

## Procedures

In addition to the procedures in place to manage identified risk listed in Table 1, the following procedures support the NCCA's commitment to safeguard children and young people with whom it engages.

## **Procedure for management of allegations of abuse or mistreatment of a child or young person by NCCA staff**

- NCCA uses the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours and the Civil Service Disciplinary Code which lay out the standards for those working in the Civil Service and how allegations of abuse or misconduct against employees should be managed.

## **Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of staff including those contracted and undertaking commissioned work where there is engagement with children and young people.**

- All full-time, permanent staff members are recruited through competitions run by the Public Appointments Service (PAS) on behalf of the NCCA and as part of that process candidates are subject to Garda Vetting.
- Seconded staff from primary and post-primary schools must be registered with the Teaching Council and provide proof of vetting obtained through the Teaching Council at commencement of secondment.
- Primary and post-primary teachers who undertake commissioned work on behalf of the NCCA must provide proof of vetting obtained through the Teaching Council before commencement of work.
- The NCCA carries out Garda Vetting for staff not recruited through one of the three processes above, and for individuals who undertake commissioned work or are contracted to work on behalf of the NCCA where there is engagement with children and young people in activities and/or at events facilitated by NCCA. The NCCA requires, those who undertake commissioned work with children and young people to provide evidence of child protection and safeguarding training.
- The NCCA requires, as part of tendering processes, documentary evidence that relevant child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place from individuals or groups contracted to provide research where children and young people are involved.

## Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla

- The NCCA has clear procedures for reporting child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla.

## Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) who are mandated

- The DLP for Early Childhood and Primary maintains a list of mandated persons in the organisation on the Early Childhood and Primary Team. The DLP for post-primary maintains a list of mandated persons in the organisation on the Post-primary Team.

## Procedure for appointing a relevant person

- The relevant person in the NCCA for the purposes of this part of the Act is **Arlene Forster (CEO)**. Any queries in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement should be directed to [arlene.forster@ncca.ie](mailto:arlene.forster@ncca.ie)

## Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm

- Upon completion, the Child Safeguarding Statement is circulated to all NCCA staff. A copy is also provided to those contracted and commissioned where there is engagement with children and young people.
- The NCCA's Children First Working Group provides resources, updates and organises training for staff as part of NCCA staff induction procedures and staff ongoing professional development.
- Annual in-person training for new staff or for staff who wish to avail of such training is organised with Tusla. Staff are required to complete a certified Tusla e-learning module on Children First prior to in-person training. NCCA also liaises with Tusla on its existing Child Protection and Safeguarding arrangements, and disseminates resources provided by Tusla to all staff, to support their ongoing awareness.

- The Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed publicly at the NCCA's head offices at ESRI Building, Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2, and Tea Lane, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. It is also available online at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) or by request from [info@ncca.ie](mailto:info@ncca.ie).

## Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. The NCCA is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children and young people safe from harm while engaging with NCCA staff. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually with the next review in September 2024 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:

Seán Ó Foghlú

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Seán Ó Foghlú, Chairperson

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

ESRI Building, Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2.

For queries, please contact **Arlene Forster (CEO)**, Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015, at [arlene.forster@ncca.ie](mailto:arlene.forster@ncca.ie)