Reach DEAF SERVICES

Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Reach Deaf Services includes:

Education Services | Supported Living Services | Development Services | National Chaplaincy

The Boarding Campuses (or Education Services) provides care for young Deaf students of school going age who attend The Holy Family School for the Deaf. This includes primary and secondary level. Reach Deaf Services support the educational, emotional, and social development of the Boarders.

2. Reach Deaf Services principles to protect children from harm are:

Adopting a child-centred approach
Committed to safeguarding all the children within our services.
Welfare of children attending boarding is of utmost importance.
Children have a right to dignity and respect.
Children have the right to be heard and listened to.
Irish Sign Language first.
Inclusivity.

3. Risk Assessment:

Reach Deaf Services has carried out an assessment of the potential for harm to children who avail of the services it provides.
The following table lists the identified risks and the procedures in place for managing these risks.
The following table can be used for future purposes with relevant risks and any additional risks identified in the future. To carry out risk assessments in future, refer to the risk identified and the procedures in place listed in this Child Safeguarding Statement. With incoming national legislation, policies and procedures, the risk assessment should be updated with new risks and information at maximum every two years or when new legislation, policies and procedures are implemented nationally.

Risks Identified	Procedures and policies in place to mitigate identified risks (to be found in Reach Deaf Services Child Protection and Welfare Policy, in the Employee Handbook, and Operational Policies)
1. Risk of harm to Boarders by a staff member or volunteer.	Safe selection and recruitment procedures for those working with children, including garda vetting. Child Protection and Welfare Policy. DLP and Relevant Person roles are in place. Safeguarding and Welfare Committee in place. DLP Meetings in place with appropriate stakeholders. Induction programme. Mandatory Children First training in HSE Learning Land (online). Code of Conduct. Training matrix in place to monitor and bespoke training required. Language Policy HSE Trust in Care Policy. Complaints Policy and Procedure in place. Employee handbook in place. Boarder Committee in place to discuss service delivery. Personal Hygiene and Intimate Care Policy. Incident Management Policy. Advocacy Policy. Restrictive Practices Policy. Behaviour Support Policy. Safe Practice and Working Alone Policy. Personal Plan and Life Skills policy. Boarders Personal Finances and Possessions Policy. Mandatory training in ISL for all staff. ISL Team in place to promote ISL as first language of organisation. ISL interpreters engage with relay interpreters if required. Medication policy and procedures in place. Staff and Boarder competency assessments completed Nursing support. Communication procedures in place such as Staff Handover Meetings and written Daily Staff Handovers.

2. Risk of harm to Boarders during outings.	Admissions, transitions, transfers and discharge policy. Incident Management Policy, and reporting and review process in place. Risk Management Policy, and risk assessment processes in place. Individual Risk Assessments when needed. Activities and Outings Policy. Adequate staff supervision based on a dependency tool in place. Life Skills and Personal Plan.
3. Risk of harm to a Boarder by non-compliance with the Children First Act 2015.	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Child Safeguarding Statement. HSE training regarding Children's First Act. Safeguarding, Welfare and Protection Committee. Relevant Person in place. List of Mandated Persons. Risk Management Policy and Procedures.
4. Risk of harm to a Boarder by another Boarder or self-harm.	Child Protection and Welfare Policy in place. Self-Harm Policy. Safeguarding and Responding to Allegations of Abuse Policy. Anti-bullying policy in place. Grouping arrangements in place for separate pods/living spaces for each age group where possible. Appropriate peer groups where possible. Admissions, Discharge and Transitions Policy. Behaviour Support Policy. Risk Management Policy. Information sharing between Boarders, families/carers, school staff, escorts, and Boarding staff. Boarding Committee Meetings in place. Complaints Policy and Procedure in place. CCTV in operation externally, at exit areas only, and at landing area in St Joseph's Boarding Campus and CCTV policy.
5. Risk of harm to a Boarder who may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected may go undetected and unreported by staff.	Safe selection and recruitment procedures for those working with children, including vetting. Child Protection and Welfare Policy. HSE Children First course on HSE Learning Land. Boarder complaint system in place. Keyworker system in place. DLP and Relevant Person roles in place. Safeguarding and Welfare Committee in place. DLP Meetings in place. Open Disclosure Policy.
6. Risk of harm to Boarders due to use/misuse of IT and social media by Boarder/staff and inappropriate use of photography and imagery.	IT Manager and external IT company monitoring safe online use. Working with Young People Online Policy. Safe Use of Social Media Policy for Young People. Individual Risk Assessments in place where required. Inappropriate websites cannot be accessed via in- service wi-fi i.e. blocked sites. Safe selection and recruitment procedures for those working with children, including garda vetting.
7. Risk of harm to a Boarder by a member of the public/visitor.	Visitors Policy. Entrance doors are secure. Access codes. Codes changed regularly. Security system in place including CCTV in specific areas. Boarders discouraged from opening doors to visitors. Sign in/sign out protocol for visitors to use. Health & Safety Statement. Visitors only permitted with authorisation and adequate supervision arrangements in place. Visitors only permitted in specific areas. Visitors use designated toilets. Individual Risk Assessment process where required. Risk Management Policy in place. Boarder education regarding keeping themselves safe, and knowledge of who to report concerns to.
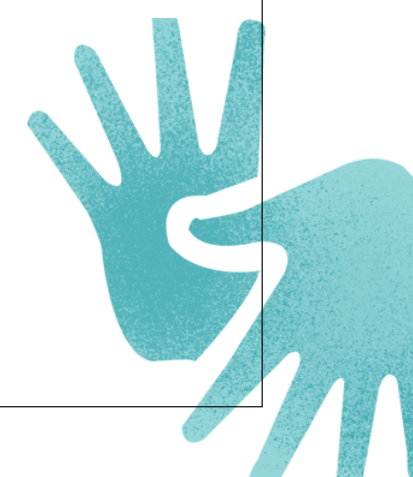
4. Procedures:

Reach Deaf Services promptly reports all concerns that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected in accordance with policies and procedures developed in line with the requirements of the:

- Children First Act 2015.
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.
- Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.
- Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

Procedures to support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service are outlined in the Risk Assessment section above.

All policies/procedures listed are available upon request.

A copy of this Child Safeguarding Statement is available on request and online at https://reachdeafservices.ie.

5. Implementation:

- Reach Deaf Services is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the practices and procedures that support our commitment to keeping children safe from harm while availing of our services.

- This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed and updated in September 2024 and will be further reviewed in May 2026 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Linda Tierney
Head of Services and
Relevant Person

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