



NCCA

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

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Child Safeguarding Statement

December 2021

Name and nature of service provided

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 25 members, all of whom are appointed for a three-year term. The members represent teachers, 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)*, the Addendum to Children First (2019) and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2019)* 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.

Guiding principles

- The NCCA is committed to maintaining the highest standards of child safeguarding in line with relevant legislation and informed by best practice.
- The NCCA is committed through its engagement with children and young people, to ensuring their safety, welfare and development as a core objective and priority.
- The NCCA is committed to ensuring the confidentiality of child protection and safeguarding concerns.
- The 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.
- The 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.
- The 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 / 087 9884896

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

Contact details: 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 / 087 2555086

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

Contact details: 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.

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"> • NCCA staff ensure there is always another adult present during research and consultation with children and young people. • 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. • Young people under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult to events organised by NCCA. • NCCA Child Protection Liaison Officers with responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding will support children's welfare and wellbeing at NCCA organised events.
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"> • 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.

<p>those who have particular vulnerabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 parents/guardians and young people over the age of 18. • NCCA staff take due care and attention when planning activities for children and young people to ensure that the wellbeing of the child or young person is paramount at all times. • 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. • 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.
<p>Risk of a child protection concern or allegation being made against an NCCA staff member(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCA utilises the <u>Civil Service Disciplinary Code (2016)</u> to address any instances of alleged serious misconduct including a child protection concern or allegation being made against a staff member(s). • NCCA staff are made aware of the Civil Service Disciplinary Code and the steps involved in dealing with a child protection concern or allegation; and training is provided on same.

<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"> • 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. • NCCA staff are expected to be familiar with information provided in Children First National Guidance on recognising abuse, 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCA anonymises published work involving children and young people by ensuring that their names are redacted. • 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. • NCCA also uses a two-step process involving two different colleagues to ensure that identifiable features/information is removed prior to publication. • Any personal details gathered as part of consent are stored securely as per the NCCA's Data Protection Policy.

Procedures

In addition to the procedures in place to manage identified risk listed in Table 1, the following procedures support the NCCA's intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service.

Procedure for management of allegations of abuse or mistreatment of a child by NCCA staff

- NCCA uses the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours which lays 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

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.
- The Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed publicly at the NCCA's head office at 35 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2, and James Fintan Lalor Avenue, Kylekippoe, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. It is also available online at www.ncca.ie or by request from 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 2022 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:



Mary O' Sullivan, Chairperson

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

35 Fitzwilliam Square

Dublin 2

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