



# Child Safeguarding Statement of St Patrick's Mental Health Services

## 1. Name of service being provided

St Patrick's Mental Health Services (SPMHS) provides services to adolescents in the following sites:

**Willow Grove Adolescent Unit**, St Patrick's Mental Health Services, James' Street, Steeven's Lane, Dublin 8, D08K7YW

**The Dean Clinic Dublin**, St Patrick's Mental Health Services, James' Street, Steeven's Lane, Dublin 8, D08K7YW

**The Dean Clinic Cork**, Unit 2003, Building 2000, City Gate, Mahon, Co Cork T12VCW6

## 2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

St Patricks Mental Health Service (SPMHS) provides mental healthcare to young people between 12-17 years of age on an inpatient (Willow Grove Adolescent Unit) and outpatient basis (Dean Clinics Dublin and Cork). The Willow Grove service also has a homecare provision for young people to access treatment while at home. This safeguarding statement pertains to all areas of SPMHS.

The goal of the services is to help young people manage their thoughts, feelings or behaviours so that they can cope better with their mental health difficulties. These difficulties may take the form of depression, anxiety, psychosis, obsessions, eating disorders or for others just finding the experience of day to day living hard. We recognise that safety is a fundamental requirement for young people to thrive.

SPMHS recognises that the welfare and protection of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations. SPMHS commits to:

- Fully comply with statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015
- Fully co-operate with the relevant authorities in relation to child protection and welfare
- Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

## 3. Risk-assessment

As defined in the Children First Act, 2015, "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, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances, or otherwise.

This definition is understood as the harm caused to children by physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. In the context of safeguarding, it may also relate to the bullying of children, child trafficking and or sexual exploitation, or the harm caused to children through the misuse of digital technology or on internet platforms.

SPMHS has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services including the area of online safety when accessing the internet. Below is a summary list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks:

Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage risk
1 Risk of harm to a child by a member of staff or harm to a child through a volunteer or a non-qualified staff such as individuals on student placement (nursing, medical and allied health).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professional registration for many staff members</li><li>• Range of HR and recruitment policies</li><li>• Governance structures</li><li>• Policy orientation and training</li><li>• Safeguarding policies</li><li>• Staff training and supervision</li><li>• Complaints process</li><li>• Preceptorship process regarding untrained nursing staff</li><li>• Non-research honorary and placement contracts policy.</li></ul>
2 Risk of harm to a young person during recreational groups/outings provided off site by members of staff/volunteers/stranger/peer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staffing policies as above.</li><li>• Recreational Activities (REC 0001) policy</li><li>• Willow Grove Recreational / Therapeutic Outing Policy</li><li>• Community Outings Checklist</li><li>• Minibus policy.</li></ul>
3 Harm to a young person from external contractors/ facilitators providing services to SPMHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Service Contractors Policy</li><li>• Facilitation of Official Visits by External Guests</li><li>• Incident Reporting and Open Disclosure Processes</li><li>• Hospital Complaints Procedure.</li></ul>
4 Harm to a child from use of media, information technology or through unauthorised photography.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Range of policies addressing digital and social media, phone use and device use and CCTV.</li><li>• On admission to Willow Grove Adolescent unit all parents and young people receive an information booklet which provides an overview of all expectations and rights of service users. This includes service rules regarding use of information technology and photography.</li></ul>

5 Harm from a safeguarding concern not being reported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training for staff regarding safeguarding. Training needs are reviewed, and records maintained and monitored by HR</li><li>• Support from the Designated Liaison Person for all staff members</li><li>• Safeguarding policies and governance structures regarding adherence to these policies.</li></ul>
6 Risk of a child being harmed by another child or bullied while accessing SPMHS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Code of conduct that all service users are requested to follow</li><li>• Anti-Bullying Policy</li><li>• Policies regarding phone use and social media.</li></ul>
7 Risk of a child harming themselves deliberately or suicide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Risk-management policies.</li><li>• Supportive observations and environmental checks</li><li>• Care planning.</li></ul>
8 Inadequate supervision leading to harm, risk of absconding or harm by accessing other medical facilities in St Patrick's Mental Health Services or Dean Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adequate staffing</li><li>• Risk management policies</li><li>• Supportive observation</li><li>• Young person escort policy</li><li>• Use of fob or door buzzer to access all areas that service adolescents</li><li>• Parents supervise adolescents when they attend the waiting area of Dean Clinics. Reception staff also have sight of the waiting areas at all times.</li><li>• Young Person Visitor Policy.</li></ul>
9 Risk of harm to a child by a visitor to the service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of fob or door buzzer to access all areas that service adolescents.</li><li>• Range of visitor policies.</li></ul>

*Completed risk-assessment available on request*

## 4. Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017), 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 and roles support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

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

*All procedures listed are available upon request.*

A Designated Liaison Person is available for all staff members or volunteer who have child protection concerns. The designated person facilitates liaison with outside agencies. They are responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within SPMHS are followed. They record all concerns brought to their attention and the actions taken in relation to a concern.

### Contact details for SPMHS' Designated Liaison Person

The Designated Liaison Person is:

Sheila O'Connor, CORU SW064999

Tel: 01 249 3436 | Hours: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Email: [safeguarding@stpatricks.ie](mailto:safeguarding@stpatricks.ie)

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is:

Elaine Donnelly, CORU SW003072

Tel: 01 249 3392 | Hours: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Email: [safeguarding@stpatricks.ie](mailto:safeguarding@stpatricks.ie)

## 5. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. SPMHS 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 Safeguarding Statement was previously reviewed on the 21 January 2025. It has been reviewed most recently on 17 September 2025. It will next be reviewed on 17 September 2027, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

**For queries regarding this Child Safeguarding Statement, please contact Sheila O'Connor, Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015.**  
**Email: [safeguarding@stpatricks.ie](mailto:safeguarding@stpatricks.ie) or Tel: 01 249 3436.**

*Signed:*

**Paul Gilligan, Chief Executive Officer  
Registered Proprietor Nominee**