

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY



OAK IRELAND

One Boarding School. Two Campuses



Woodlands
Girls' Campus



Dublin Oak
Boys' Campus

Guiding with integrity, guarding with care.



Effective 1 September 2026, this document replaces the prior version of the Children's Safeguarding Policy for Oak Ireland.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7

SECTION 1:

SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPLES.....	13
Objectives	13
Commitment of the Territorial Director of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ.....	14
Mission.....	17
Legal, Regulatory and Canonical Framework.....	18
Definitions and Interpretation.....	19
Child Safeguarding Policy Statement - risk assessment.....	23
Safeguarding Principles.....	23
Rights of Children and Young People.....	25
Best Interests of the Child.....	25
Equality, Inclusion and Respect.....	26
Student Participation and Engagement.....	27
Partnership with Parents and Guardians.....	28
Safeguarding Culture.....	28
Leadership, governance and accountability.....	29
Structure of Oak Ireland.....	30
Role of the Territorial Director of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ.....	31
Responsibilities of the Board of Directors.....	32
Executive Director and Directors.....	32
Safeguarding Committee.....	33
Director of Safeguarding.....	34
Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person.....	34
Local Safeguarding Representative.....	35
Other mandated persons.....	36

SECTION 2:

SAFE ENVIRONMENTS, SAFEGUARDING AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS.....	37
Safeguarding Risk Management Framework.....	37
Safeguarding Reviews and Continuous Improvement.....	39
Safe Environment Standards.....	40
Boarding Safeguarding.....	41

Student Welfare.....	42
Individual Support and one to one contact.....	43
Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing.....	43
International Students.....	44
Educational visits, trips and residential activities	45
International Travel and Overseas Activities	45
Transport and Travel with Students	46
Online Safety and Digital Environments	47
Photography, Media and the Use of Images	48
External Organisations and Third-Party Providers	49
Recruitment, vetting and people management	50
Vetting and Suitability Assessment	50
Re-vetting and ongoing suitability	51
Coworkers and Volunteers	52
Inductions and Safeguarding Orientation	52
Safeguarding Training and Professional Development	53
Professional conduct and safeguarding boundaries	54
Standards of Professional Conduct	54
Professional Boundaries	54
Physical Contact and Personal Care	55
Digital Communications	56
Social Media and online conduct	57
Gifts, Hospitality and Favouritism	57
Boarding School Conduct	58
Recognising, responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns.....	59
Safeguarding Awareness and Recognition of Harm	59
Responding to Disclosures and Safeguarding Concerns	60
Internal Reporting of Safeguarding Concerns	61
Statutory Reporting and Engagement with Civil Authorities	62
Safeguarding Concerns Involving Clergy, Consecrated Members and Church Personnel	63
Confidentiality and the Sharing of Safeguarding Information ...	63
Managing allegations and safeguarding concerns involving personnel.....	64
Allegations Against Employees	65
Allegations Against Volunteers, Contractors and External Personnel.....	66
Allegations Involving Clergy and Consecrated Members	66
Immediate Protective Measures	67
Administrative Leave and Temporary Restrictions	67
Support for Complainants and Affected Persons	68
Support for Respondents	69

Risk Assessment during case management	70
Safeguarding Records, Information Management and Confidentiality.....	71
Information Sharing and Access to Safeguarding Information	71
Retention, Archiving and Disposal of Safeguarding Records	72
Data Protection and Privacy	72
Cooperation with statutory, regulatory and church authorities	73
Cooperation with Statutory Authorities	73
Cooperation with Church Safeguarding Authorities	73
Engagement with Professional Advisers and External Specialists.....	74
Safeguarding assurance, monitoring and continuous improvement	75
Safeguarding Audits and Self-Assessment	75
Safeguarding Reporting and Governance Oversight	76
Policy review, approval and implementation	77
Review of the Policy	77
Approval and Ratification	77
Publication and Accessibility	78
Commencement and Implementation	78

FOREWORD

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Oak Ireland to introduce this Child Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Implementation Manual. Every day, families place their trust in Oak Ireland to educate, guide and care for their children. We recognise the significance of that trust and the responsibility it carries. The wellbeing, safety and dignity of every child entrusted to our care are fundamental to our mission and to the values that shape our educational community.

As boarding schools, we exercise a particularly important duty of care. Students depend upon us not only for their education but also for their wellbeing, personal development and daily support. Creating environments in which young people feel safe, respected and valued is therefore one of our most important responsibilities and a commitment shared by every member of the Oak Ireland community.

The Board of Directors is committed to ensuring that safeguarding remains at the heart of Oak Ireland. Effective safeguarding requires strong governance, clear accountability, professional competence and a culture in which the welfare of children is always the paramount consideration. It also requires the active participation of staff, volunteers, parents and students themselves. Safeguarding is most effective when it is understood as a shared responsibility and embedded within the daily life of the Academies.

This Child Safeguarding Policy establishes the safeguarding framework that governs Oak Ireland. It sets out the principles, responsibilities and standards that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection and reflects our commitment to meeting the requirements of Irish law, recognised safeguarding best practice and the safeguarding standards of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

This Policy is complemented by three supporting documents. The Safeguarding Implementation Manual provides detailed procedures, guidance, templates, and operational resources to support the implementation of safeguarding arrangements throughout Oak Ireland. The Code of Conduct establishes the expected standards of behaviour and professional boundaries for staff, volunteers, and others engaged with students, helping to promote a safe, respectful, and child-centred environment.

The Student Safeguarding Handbook provides students with accessible information about safeguarding, wellbeing, reporting concerns, and the support available to them within the Academy community.

Together, these documents form an integrated safeguarding framework that supports effective governance, practical implementation and meaningful engagement with students. Through this framework, Oak Ireland seeks not only to meet its safeguarding obligations but to foster a culture in which every child feels protected, respected and empowered to thrive.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank all those who contribute to safeguarding within Oak Ireland.

Most importantly, we reaffirm our commitment to the children and young people entrusted to our care. Their welfare, dignity and wellbeing will remain at the centre of our decisions, our policies and our actions.

I commend this Child Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Implementation Manual to all members of the Oak Ireland community and ask that each of us continue to play our part in maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding and child protection.

Yours sincerely,

Valerie McGovern
Executive Director
Oak Ireland

INTRODUCTION

Oak Ireland recognises that every child has the right to grow, learn and develop within an environment that is safe, respectful, inclusive and supportive. Safeguarding is therefore fundamental to the mission of the Academies and forms an integral part of educational provision, boarding life, pastoral care and all activities undertaken on behalf of the organisation. Safeguarding is not viewed solely as a matter of legal compliance or risk management; rather, it is a shared responsibility that informs governance, leadership, professional practice and daily interactions throughout the Academy community.

The 2024 document A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland is the national policy for child protection in the Catholic Church in Ireland. This document sets out the child safeguarding procedures and protocols that need to be implemented by the institutions that are under the Catholic Church in Ireland, including Oak Ireland.

Recognizing our duty to offer children and young people the best possible care, supporting their wellbeing and protecting them from harm, this policy outlines straightforward procedures to help ensure that these standards are met.

The procedures take account of:

- The Children First Act 2015
- The updated Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children published in 2017
- Safeguarding Children Policy & Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024 “A Safe and Welcoming Church”
- UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ireland in 1992.

These procedures apply to all Oak Ireland’s personnel and anyone working with children on behalf of Oak Ireland. Unless otherwise specified, the term “Oak Ireland’s personnel” is used throughout this document to refer collectively to staff and volunteers who work for Oak Ireland.

As shown in the following infogram, there are three core standards to the Church's Safeguarding Children Policy:



Leadership, Governance and Accountability

This principle requires the responsible authority to demonstrate its commitment to protecting children by establishing an effective system of governance. This system must define explicit rules and procedures specifically designed to achieve this objective. The plan is further divided into five distinct measures:

1. That the Church authority demonstrates his/her personal commitment to safeguarding children through open and transparent communication in relation to safeguarding matters by delivering sermons, pastoral letters, newsletters, etc. This requires the Church authority to be personally available and to listen with openness, humility and compassion.

2. The Church authority puts in place a system of governance that identifies clear procedures, accountability structures and quality assurance, in which roles and responsibilities are explicit. These are specified in the Strategic Safeguarding Plan of the relevant Church body.

3. The Church authority takes decisive action. Relevant Church authorities must comply with the obligations under Vos estis lux mundi (VELM) to ensure accountability for actions or omissions intended to interfere with or avoid civil or canonical investigations.

4. The Church authority should demonstrate his/her commitment by providing training, care and support for those in safeguarding ministry, through initial and ongoing formation for clerics, male and female religious and lay personnel.

5. In recognition of the decision-making responsibilities and potential isolation of the safeguarding role, mechanisms need to be developed to support Church authorities. These will include training for leadership, induction training in safeguarding, and continuous professional and personal development to include skills and knowledge for leading in safeguarding challenges.

Nurturing a culture of safeguarding

This core principle stipulates, inter alia, that codes of conduct should be established for all individuals engaged in activities involving children; a thorough risk assessment must be conducted; and appropriate safeguards concerning the use of information technology should be developed and implemented.

Consistent with the aforementioned standard, this requirement is further divided into nine measures.

1. Procedures for recruitment, including Garda Vetting.
2. Induction and safeguarding training.
3. Risk-assess and ensure that measures are put in place to manage risk to children so that children in Church ministry are safe and free from harm. In the Republic of Ireland (ROI) there is a legal requirement to complete a child safeguarding statement: Children First (2015)
4. Codes of behaviour for children involved in Church-related activities and codes of conduct for adults that promote best practice and integrity in ministry.
5. Procedures to create equal opportunities for children (empowering all children to participate, including children with specific needs and children whose first language is not English).

6. Appropriate safeguards for using information technology (IT) and social media when engaging with children.
7. Support for and supervision of those in child safeguarding roles.
8. Procedures for dealing with complaints, and for whistleblowing.
9. Procedures for managing external contexts, including lay associations of the faithful; visiting clerics and male and female religious; those ministering in external organisations; and groups using Church property (this measure is not applicable to Oak Ireland).

Responding pastorally and reporting according to civil and canon law

This core principle stipulates, inter alia, that the authority is responsible for ensuring all reports of suspected child safeguarding issues are handled in accordance with both civil and canon law requirements, that appropriate care is provided to complainants, and that written documentation is maintained. Similar to the preceding core principles, this principle is further divided into three measures. It should be noted, however, that certain activities may not be relevant for Oak Ireland, while others require a suitable handover or follow-up procedure to be implemented with the Legion or members of consecrated life.

1. Reporting
2. Caring for complainants
3. Just process for respondents

Consequently, and as an institution directed by the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, which is part of the Catholic Church in Ireland, the safeguarding framework adopted by Oak Ireland is informed by the three core safeguarding standards indicated above: Leadership, Governance and Accountability; Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding; and Reporting Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law. These three standards provide the foundation upon which safeguarding governance, safeguarding practice and safeguarding assurance are built throughout the Academies and are reflected throughout the chapters of this Policy.

This Policy is organised into two principal sections: the first section establishes the safeguarding framework that underpins all safeguarding activity within Oak Ireland. It sets out the Academy's safeguarding commitment, the principles that guide safeguarding practice, the legal and regulatory framework within which safeguarding responsibilities are exercised, and the governance and accountability structures that support effective safeguarding leadership. It also defines the roles and responsibilities of those entrusted with safeguarding oversight and promotes a culture in which the welfare of children remains paramount.

The second section focuses on the practical safeguarding standards that apply throughout the Academies. It addresses safeguarding risk management, the creation and maintenance of safe environments, safer recruitment and people management, professional conduct, safeguarding responsibilities within educational and boarding settings, and the measures adopted to protect children from harm. It also sets out Oak Ireland's approach to recognising, responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns, managing allegations, maintaining safeguarding records and ensuring ongoing safeguarding assurance and continuous improvement.

It should be noted that this Policy forms part of a broader safeguarding framework consisting of three additional but complementary documents: the Safeguarding Implementation Manual, which provides the operational procedures, guidance, templates and supporting resources necessary to implement the requirements of this Policy in practice; the Code of Conduct, which establishes the expected standards of behaviour, professional boundaries and safeguarding responsibilities for staff, volunteers and other adults engaged with students; and the Student Safeguarding Handbook, which provides students with accessible information regarding safeguarding, wellbeing, personal safety, reporting concerns and the supports available to them within the Academy community.

Together, all four documents (policy, code of conduct, implementation manual and student's handbook) support a consistent and integrated approach to safeguarding across all Oak Ireland activities. They are intended to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are clearly understood, effectively implemented and continuously strengthened in a manner that protects children, supports families and promotes a culture in which every child is respected, valued and safe.

The chapters that follow set out the safeguarding principles, governance structures, risk management arrangements, responsibilities and standards that underpin safeguarding throughout Oak Ireland. Through the implementation of this framework, Oak Ireland seeks not only to fulfil its legal and organisational responsibilities but also to foster educational and residential environments in which every child can flourish in safety, dignity and confidence.



Woodlands Academy, Girls' Campus.

SECTION 1

SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPLES

Objectives

The objective of this Policy is to establish a comprehensive safeguarding framework for Oak Ireland and to ensure that consistent safeguarding standards are applied throughout all educational, residential, pastoral and extracurricular activities. The Policy seeks to protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm while promoting environments in which children can develop safely and confidently. It establishes governance arrangements, defines safeguarding responsibilities and provides the framework within which safeguarding concerns are identified, reported and managed.

This Policy applies to all activities organised, managed, sponsored or authorised by Oak Ireland, including educational programmes, boarding provision, sporting activities, retreats, pilgrimages, educational visits, international travel, summer programmes and online activities. The safeguarding responsibilities described in this Policy extend to all environments in which the Academies exercise responsibility for children and young people.

In addition, the Policy applies to all employees, coworkers, volunteers, clergy, consecrated members, chaplains and external providers who work with children or who undertake activities on behalf of the Academies. Compliance with this Policy is a condition of employment, appointment, engagement or participation in Academy activities.

The Policy shall be implemented in conjunction with associated safeguarding procedures and supporting documents.

Where uncertainty arises regarding the interpretation of safeguarding requirements, the welfare and best interests of the child shall guide decision-making.

Commitment of the Territorial Director of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ

As an educational institution directed by the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, Oak Ireland operates within a safeguarding framework that reflects both its statutory obligations and its responsibilities as a Catholic educational institution.

The Territorial Director of the Legionaries of Christ recognises that safeguarding is fundamental to the mission entrusted to Oak Ireland and bears overall responsibility for ensuring that effective safeguarding structures, leadership arrangements, governance systems and accountability mechanisms are established, maintained and supported throughout the organisation.

In addition, he expects every person exercising responsibilities within Oak Ireland to uphold the standards established by this Policy and to contribute actively to the protection, wellbeing and dignity of every child entrusted to the care of the Academies. Safeguarding concerns shall be addressed promptly, fairly, transparently and compassionately, with the welfare and best interests of the child remaining the paramount consideration in all safeguarding decisions and actions.

The Territorial Director further expects Oak Ireland to cooperate fully with statutory authorities, Church safeguarding authorities and other relevant agencies in the fulfilment of safeguarding responsibilities and to maintain safeguarding arrangements that reflect applicable legal requirements, Church safeguarding standards and recognised best practice.

In recognition of the importance of visible safeguarding leadership and in accordance with the principles of A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2024), the Territorial Director has issued the following communication to demonstrate his personal commitment to safeguarding and to reaffirm the commitment of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ and Oak Ireland to creating and maintaining safe environments for all children and young people.

Territorial Director's commitment to safeguarding

As Territorial Director of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ in Ireland, I am pleased to present Children's Safeguarding Policy for the Oak International Academies in Ireland boarding schools. Rooted in the mission and educational vision of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, this policy reflects our commitment to forming environments where children and young people are safe, respected, valued, and encouraged to grow in faith, character, leadership, and human development.

This document has been prepared in accordance with the safeguarding standards of the Catholic Church in Ireland, A Safe and Welcoming Church (2024), the Children First Act 2015, and current civil and canon law requirements. It also reflects the ongoing commitment of the Legionaries of Christ to strengthening safeguarding practices across all apostolates, schools, and ministries entrusted to our care.

"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me" (Mark 9:37). These words of Christ remain central to our educational mission. Within Oak Ireland, safeguarding is not simply a legal or procedural responsibility; it is a Gospel obligation flowing from the dignity of every human person and from our mission to accompany young people in a safe and faith-filled environment.

As Territorial Director, I reaffirm my personal commitment and the commitment of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ to maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding and child protection throughout our academies and boarding communities. We recognise our responsibility to ensure that safeguarding structures are properly resourced, that safeguarding personnel are suitably trained and supported, and that all staff, religious, volunteers, and collaborators clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children and young people.

Because boarding schools involve a high level of trust, accompaniment, pastoral care, formation activities, travel, and community life, safeguarding vigilance must remain present in every aspect of academy life. For this reason, Oak Ireland implements clear safeguarding procedures, safer recruitment measures, reporting mechanisms, codes of conduct, supervision protocols, and ongoing safeguarding training to ensure the wellbeing and protection of all boarders and students.

The Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ is also committed to fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, ability to take criticism, true humility, and continuous improvement in safeguarding practice. We recognise the importance of learning from the failures and harms experienced within Church contexts in the past and remain committed to ensuring that our Academies are places where children can flourish safely and where concerns are addressed promptly, compassionately, and responsibly.

Should any safeguarding concern or allegation arise involving a member of staff, volunteer, religious, or any person working within Oak Ireland, we are committed to ensuring that all procedures are followed fully and promptly, including reporting to the relevant statutory and Church authorities in accordance with civil and canon law.

Through faithful adherence to safeguarding standards and the educational mission of the Church, we seek to ensure that Oak Ireland remains a community of trust, formation, excellence, and safety where every child and young person is protected, respected, and empowered to thrive.

Fr. Valentin Gögele L.C.
25 May 2026



Woodlands Academy, Girls' Campus.

MISSION

The mission of Oak Ireland is rooted in a commitment to the holistic development of young people and to the creation of educational communities founded upon respect, integrity, service and human dignity. Safeguarding is inseparable from this mission and is fundamental to the fulfilment of the Academy's educational and pastoral responsibilities.

Mission of Oak Academies

We are catholic boarding schools of Regnum Christi, proudly and explicitly sharing in the mission of the Semper Altius School Network and the Prepa Anáhuac Network: to form well-rounded individuals and Christian leaders who will renew society.

Oak Ireland recognises that safeguarding extends beyond the prevention of abuse. It encompasses the broader responsibility to create environments that promote wellbeing, foster positive relationships and support the healthy development of children. Effective safeguarding therefore requires attention not only to protection from harm but also to the conditions that enable children to thrive.

As Catholic educational institutions, the Academies seek to uphold values that affirm the dignity of every person and encourage respect, compassion, responsibility and justice. These values inform safeguarding practice and reinforce the Academy's commitment to placing the welfare of children at the centre of organisational life.

Safeguarding shall therefore be integrated into governance, leadership, boarding provision, educational programmes, pastoral care and community life. Decisions affecting children shall be guided by safeguarding considerations and by a commitment to creating environments that are safe, inclusive and supportive.

Legal, Regulatory and Canonical Framework

The safeguarding framework of Oak Ireland is informed by civil law, Church safeguarding standards, educational best practice and the Academy's commitment to the dignity and wellbeing of every child entrusted to its care. The Academies recognise that safeguarding is both a legal obligation and a moral responsibility. Compliance with legal requirements establishes an essential foundation for safeguarding practice; however, safeguarding extends beyond compliance and requires the active promotion of safe environments, respectful relationships and a culture in which the welfare of children remains paramount.

This Policy shall be implemented in accordance with all applicable legislation governing the protection and welfare of children. In particular, the Academies shall comply with the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and all other relevant statutory provisions relating to child protection, education, data protection, equality and health and safety. Where legislation is amended, repealed or replaced, the Academies shall take appropriate steps to ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain aligned with current legal requirements.

As educational institutions operating under the direction of the Legionaries of Christ, the Academies also recognise the importance of safeguarding standards established by the Catholic Church in Ireland. Safeguarding arrangements shall therefore reflect the principles and requirements contained within A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024 and any other safeguarding standards, guidance or requirements issued by competent Church authorities.

Oak Ireland acknowledges that certain safeguarding concerns may give rise to obligations under both civil and canon law. Where concerns involve clergy, consecrated members or other individuals subject to ecclesiastical authority, the Academies shall ensure that safeguarding responsibilities arising under Church procedures are fulfilled. Such obligations shall be discharged in a manner that fully respects and supports statutory reporting requirements and cooperation with civil authorities.

Nothing within this Policy shall be interpreted as limiting or delaying compliance with statutory safeguarding obligations. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the protection and welfare of children shall remain the primary consideration and statutory reporting requirements shall take precedence in accordance with applicable law.

The Academies shall maintain appropriate arrangements to monitor legislative, regulatory and safeguarding developments and shall review safeguarding policies and procedures periodically to ensure continued compliance and effectiveness.

Definitions and Interpretation

The purpose of this section is to provide clarity and consistency in the interpretation and application of the Oak Ireland Child Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures. Unless otherwise stated, these definitions apply throughout the policy, the Code of Conduct, the Safeguarding Implementation Manual and the Student's Safeguarding Handbook.

Academies: "Academies" means Oak Ireland and includes all schools (i.e. Woodlands Academy and Dublin Oak Academy), facilities, programmes, activities, services, personnel and operations under its governance and control.

Abuse: means the mistreatment of a child whereby the child's safety, welfare, dignity, development or wellbeing is adversely affected. Abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect as defined by Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and applicable Irish legislation.

Adult: A person who has reached eighteen (18) years of age.

Advisor: A person appointed to provide information, guidance and support to a respondent during safeguarding processes.

Allegation: A statement, complaint, concern, disclosure or report suggesting that a person may have engaged in conduct that has harmed, may have harmed or may pose a risk of harm to a child.

Child: Any person under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Child Safeguarding: The policies, procedures, practices and measures implemented to prevent harm to children, promote their welfare and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

Child Safeguarding Statement: The statutory statement required under the Children First Act 2015 outlining safeguarding risks and the measures implemented to manage those risks.

Code of Conduct: The standards of behaviour expected of personnel, volunteers, contractors and others who interact with students.

Complainant: A person who raises a safeguarding concern, complaint or allegation.

Concern: Any information, observation, disclosure, allegation, suspicion or incident that may indicate that a child has been harmed, is being harmed or may be at risk of harm.

Contractor: Any individual or organisation engaged by Oak Ireland to provide services, whether on a temporary, permanent or occasional basis.

DLP (Designated Liaison Person): The person appointed by Oak Ireland to receive safeguarding concerns and reports and to act as the primary safeguarding liaison with statutory authorities.

Deputy DLP: The person appointed to support the DLP and undertake DLP functions when required.

External Organisation: Any organisation, group, club, institution, provider or association that is not part of Oak Ireland but is authorised to use Academy facilities or deliver activities involving students.

An Garda Síochána: Is the national police and security service of the Republic of Ireland.

Harm: As defined in the Children First Act 2015, 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”.

Mandated Person: A person designated under the Children First Act 2015 as having specific statutory child protection reporting obligations.

Oak Academies Personnel: Includes employees, boarding staff, deans, coworkers, volunteers, contractors, chaplains, coaches, and any other adult authorised to work with or on behalf of Oak Ireland.

Parent: Includes a biological parent, adoptive parent, legal guardian or any person with parental responsibility for a child.

Pastoral Support: Educational, emotional, spiritual, behavioural or welfare support provided to students.

Personal Care: Assistance provided to a student in relation to hygiene, health, mobility, dressing, medication or other personal needs.

Pilgrimage: Any organised religious journey, retreat or faith-based educational visit organised, sponsored or approved by Oak Ireland.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern: The standard used when considering whether a child protection concern should be reported. A concern may arise from a disclosure, observation, allegation, behaviour, injury, pattern of incidents or other relevant information.

Respondent: A person against whom a safeguarding allegation, complaint or concern has been made.

Safeguarding: The responsibility to promote the welfare of children, prevent harm, protect children from abuse and respond appropriately to concerns.

Safeguarding Committee: The committee established by Oak Ireland to oversee safeguarding governance, compliance and continuous improvement.

Safeguarding Director: The person responsible for strategic safeguarding leadership, implementation and oversight throughout Oak Ireland.

Staff: Any employee of Oak Ireland, whether full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent.

Student: Any child enrolled in or participating in an Oak Ireland educational programme.

Tusla: The Child and Family Agency of Ireland and the statutory authority responsible for child protection and welfare services.

Whistleblowing: The reporting, in good faith, of concerns relating to safeguarding failures, misconduct, policy breaches, unsafe practices or risks to children.

Where uncertainty arises regarding the interpretation of terminology used within this Policy, interpretation shall be guided by applicable legislation, safeguarding guidance and the overarching objective of promoting the welfare and protection of children.



Dublin Oak, Boys' Campus.

Child Safeguarding Policy Statement - Risk Assessment

This Children's Safeguarding Policy has been prepared by Oak Ireland to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and has been developed in accordance with the principles set out in A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2024), while taking into account the educational and boarding context of the academies. In accordance with the **Children First Act 2015**, Oak Ireland has also prepared a separate **Child Safeguarding Policy Statement - Risk Assessment**, which identifies the potential risks of harm to children associated with the Academies' activities and the procedures in place to manage those risks.

The Statement and Risk Assessment form an integral part of Oak Ireland's safeguarding framework and is available as a separate document on the Academies' webpages or through this link: **(Statement and Risk Assessment)**.

Safeguarding Principles

The safeguarding arrangements of Oak Ireland are founded upon a number of core principles that inform governance, decision-making, professional conduct and organisational culture. These principles provide the foundation upon which all safeguarding activities are based and shall guide the interpretation and implementation of this Policy.

The welfare of the child shall be the paramount consideration in all safeguarding matters. Decisions concerning safeguarding shall be informed by the needs, welfare, safety and best interests of children and shall seek to promote their protection and wellbeing at all times.

The Academies recognise the inherent dignity and worth of every child. All children shall be treated with respect, fairness and compassion and shall be afforded opportunities to develop within environments that are safe, supportive and conducive to their wellbeing. Safeguarding measures shall be implemented in a manner that protects dignity while promoting participation, inclusion and personal development.

The Academies are committed to creating a culture in which safeguarding is recognised as a shared responsibility. Every person working within or on behalf of the Academies has a role to

play in promoting the welfare of children and in contributing to safe and supportive environments. Safeguarding shall therefore be embedded within leadership, governance, educational practice, boarding provision and organisational culture.

The prevention of harm is a central objective of the safeguarding framework. The Academies shall seek to identify and manage safeguarding risks proactively through effective governance, safer recruitment practices, training, supervision, risk management and the promotion of safeguarding awareness. Preventative safeguarding measures shall be integrated into all aspects of Academy life.

Safeguarding concerns shall be managed promptly, fairly and responsibly. The Academies shall maintain arrangements that support the reporting, assessment and management of safeguarding concerns and shall cooperate fully with statutory authorities and other relevant agencies. Individuals who raise safeguarding concerns in good faith shall be treated respectfully and supported appropriately throughout safeguarding processes.

The Academies are committed to **fostering a culture of openness and accountability** in which safeguarding concerns may be raised without fear and in which safeguarding responsibilities are understood and fulfilled. Leaders at all levels shall model safeguarding values and shall promote environments characterised by transparency, respect and professional responsibility.

Safeguarding is an evolving area of practice that requires continuous reflection and improvement. The Academies shall therefore review safeguarding arrangements regularly, learn from experience, monitor safeguarding performance and seek opportunities to strengthen safeguarding systems, culture and practice. Through this commitment to continuous improvement, the Academies aim to ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain effective, responsive and centred upon the welfare of children.

Rights of Children and Young People

Oak Ireland recognises and respects the rights of children as articulated in Irish law, Church safeguarding standards and internationally recognised principles concerning the protection and welfare of children. Children are entitled to be treated with dignity, fairness and respect. They have the right to learn, develop and participate in educational and residential life within environments that are safe, supportive and free from abuse, neglect, discrimination and exploitation.

The Academies recognise that children are not merely recipients of safeguarding measures but active participants in the safeguarding process. Children shall be encouraged to express their views, raise concerns and seek support whenever they feel unsafe, worried or uncertain. Appropriate mechanisms shall be maintained to enable students to communicate concerns and to ensure that those concerns are listened to and taken seriously.

Safeguarding arrangements shall be designed to promote the voice of the child and to ensure that children are informed, in an age-appropriate manner, about safeguarding supports, reporting pathways and sources of assistance available to them. Particular attention shall be given to students who may experience additional vulnerability arising from disability, special educational needs, language barriers, family circumstances, boarding arrangements, international student status or other factors that may affect their ability to access support or communicate concerns.

The Academies shall seek to create an environment in which children feel valued, respected and confident that concerns raised in good faith will receive an appropriate response.

Best Interests of the Child

The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all safeguarding decisions, actions and interventions undertaken by the Academies. In determining the best interests of a child, due regard shall be given to the child's safety, welfare, developmental needs, emotional wellbeing, views, circumstances and individual needs. Decisions shall be informed by professional judgement, safeguarding expertise, available information and applicable legal obligations.

The Academies recognise that safeguarding decisions often require the balancing of competing considerations. In such circumstances, the welfare and protection of the child shall take precedence over organisational convenience, reputational considerations or the interests of adults.

The best interests principle shall apply throughout all safeguarding activities, including risk assessments, reporting decisions, support planning, educational provision, boarding arrangements and responses to safeguarding concerns. Where concerns arise regarding a child's welfare, the Academies shall act promptly and proportionately and shall seek to ensure that decisions are informed by relevant safeguarding information and professional advice where appropriate.

Equality, Inclusion and Respect

Oak Ireland is committed to fostering a culture of inclusion, respect and equality in which every child is valued as an individual and treated with dignity. The Academies recognise that children experience safeguarding differently and that some children may face additional barriers to protection, participation or access to support. Safeguarding arrangements shall therefore be implemented in a manner that recognises individual needs, promotes inclusion and seeks to remove barriers that may prevent children from receiving appropriate support.

Safeguarding measures shall be applied fairly, consistently and without discrimination. The Academies shall seek to ensure that safeguarding information, support mechanisms and reporting arrangements are accessible and responsive to the needs of all students. The Academies shall actively promote a culture in which diversity is respected and in which bullying, harassment, intimidation, exclusion or discriminatory behaviour are not tolerated.

All members of the Academy community are expected to contribute to an environment characterised by respect, courtesy, compassion and mutual responsibility.

Student Participation and Engagement

The Academies recognise that safeguarding is strengthened when children are empowered to participate meaningfully in matters affecting their wellbeing and safety. Students shall be encouraged to contribute to the development of a positive safeguarding culture through participation in educational programmes, wellbeing initiatives, student leadership structures and other opportunities appropriate to their age and maturity.

The views of students shall be taken into account, where appropriate, when developing safeguarding initiatives, reviewing safeguarding arrangements and evaluating the effectiveness of wellbeing supports. The participation of students in safeguarding processes shall always be managed in a manner that is safe, supportive and respectful of individual circumstances.

The Academies shall provide age-appropriate safeguarding information and shall ensure that students understand how to seek assistance, report concerns and access support services. Students shall be encouraged to communicate openly with trusted adults and safeguarding personnel. The Academies shall seek to create an environment in which students feel safe discussing concerns relating to their own welfare or the welfare

The Student's Safeguarding Handbook has been developed specifically for students and provides accessible information about safeguarding, wellbeing, personal safety and the supports available within Oak Ireland. It explains what safeguarding means, identifies the individuals and services students can approach if they have concerns, and outlines the steps that may be taken when concerns are raised.

The Handbook is intended to empower students to seek support whenever needed and to provide reassurance that their safety, wellbeing and dignity are taken seriously and that they will never be expected to face difficulties alone.

Partnership with Parents and Guardians

Oak Ireland recognises that parents and guardians play a vital role in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children. Safeguarding arrangements shall therefore seek to foster constructive relationships between the Academies and families, founded upon trust, openness, mutual respect and shared responsibility for the welfare of students.

Parents and guardians shall be provided with information regarding safeguarding arrangements, safeguarding contacts, reporting pathways and relevant safeguarding policies. The Academies shall seek to ensure that parents understand the safeguarding responsibilities of the organisation and the measures implemented to protect children.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the Academies shall engage with parents and guardians in a manner that is consistent with safeguarding requirements, legal obligations and the welfare of the child. Circumstances may arise in which information cannot be shared immediately with parents or guardians where doing so could place a child at risk or compromise safeguarding processes.

The Academies recognise that effective safeguarding requires cooperation between families, educational personnel, safeguarding personnel and statutory authorities. Safeguarding arrangements shall therefore promote communication, collaboration and shared commitment to the protection and wellbeing of children.

Safeguarding Culture

Safeguarding is not solely a matter of policy compliance but an essential element of the culture, identity and daily life of Oak Ireland. The Academies shall seek to cultivate a safeguarding culture characterised by vigilance, accountability, transparency, compassion and respect. Safeguarding values shall inform decision-making, leadership practices, educational provision, boarding arrangements, pastoral care and interactions throughout the Academy community.

A positive safeguarding culture is one in which concerns are recognised and addressed promptly, in which individuals feel confident raising concerns, and in which safeguarding responsibilities

are understood and accepted at every level of the organisation.

Leaders shall model safeguarding values through their conduct, decision-making and commitment to continuous improvement. All personnel shall be expected to contribute actively to the maintenance of safe environments and to challenge practices or behaviours that may compromise the welfare of children.

The Academies recognise that safeguarding culture cannot be achieved solely through policies and procedures. It requires ongoing education, professional development, supervision, reflection and organisational commitment. Accordingly, safeguarding shall remain a standing consideration in governance, strategic planning, operational management and quality assurance processes.

The effectiveness of safeguarding culture shall be reviewed regularly through audits, compliance reviews, training evaluations, student feedback, parent engagement and other assurance mechanisms established by the Academies.

Leadership, governance and accountability

Effective safeguarding depends upon clear leadership, robust governance and a culture of accountability. Oak Ireland recognises that safeguarding is a fundamental governance responsibility and shall therefore ensure that safeguarding considerations are embedded within strategic planning, operational management, risk management and decision-making processes at every level of the organisation.

The governance framework established by the Academies is intended to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are clearly defined, understood and discharged appropriately. Safeguarding shall not be regarded as the sole responsibility of designated safeguarding personnel. Rather, safeguarding is a collective responsibility that extends throughout the organisation and requires active engagement from staff, volunteers, contractors and all individuals acting on behalf of the Academies.

The Academies shall maintain governance arrangements that support the prevention of abuse, the promotion of child wellbeing, the effective management of safeguarding concerns and the continuous improvement of safeguarding practice.

Governance structures shall facilitate oversight, accountability, transparency and independent challenge, ensuring that safeguarding remains a central consideration in organisational life.

Safeguarding governance shall be informed by the principles of proportionality, accountability, transparency and continuous improvement. The effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements shall be reviewed regularly through reporting, auditing, compliance reviews and strategic planning processes.

Detailed operational responsibilities, reporting arrangements and supporting procedures are set out in the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.

Structure of Oak Ireland

OAK IRELAND is a boarding school in Ireland operating across two separate campuses: Woodlands for girls and Dublin Oak for boys.

Both campuses share the same educational and formative mission and are part of Oak Ireland. Each campus provides a dedicated boarding environment for its students.

Oak Ireland is directed by the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, in collaboration with the respective campus leadership teams.



Woodlands

Girls' Campus
Wingfield House, Kilmacanogue,
Co. Wicklow, A98 FK10



Dublin Oak

Boys' Campus
Kilcroney Castle, Kilmacanogue,
Co. Wicklow, A98 T021

Role of the Territorial Director of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ

The Territorial Director of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ bears ultimate responsibility for safeguarding governance within the academies. The Director shall approve safeguarding policies and shall satisfy himself that appropriate systems, resources and leadership structures are in place to support the effective protection and wellbeing of children. He shall ensure that safeguarding considerations are integrated into governance and risk management processes.

The Territorial Director shall receive regular safeguarding reports that provide assurance regarding safeguarding performance, compliance, training, incidents, audits and risk management activities. He shall review safeguarding information critically and shall seek assurance that safeguarding concerns are managed appropriately and that lessons arising from safeguarding incidents are incorporated into organisational learning and improvement.

The Territorial Director shall maintain oversight of safeguarding risks and shall ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to address areas of concern. Where deficiencies are identified, he shall require corrective action and shall monitor progress until satisfactory improvement has been achieved.

The Territorial Director shall promote a culture in which safeguarding is recognised as a fundamental responsibility and shall support the Board of Directors throughout the organisation. The Territorial Director shall ensure that safeguarding remains an important consideration within the governance and oversight structures of the apostolate and shall receive appropriate safeguarding information to facilitate oversight and accountability.

Where safeguarding concerns involve clergy, consecrated members or other individuals subject to ecclesiastical authority, the Territorial Director shall ensure that appropriate safeguarding and canonical processes are implemented in accordance with applicable Church requirements.

The Territorial Director shall cooperate with statutory authorities, Church safeguarding authorities and Academy leadership in the fulfilment of safeguarding responsibilities and shall support

continuous improvement in safeguarding practice throughout the Academies.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides strategic oversight in relation to the operations of Oak Ireland and shall support the development and maintenance of safeguarding arrangements consistent with the mission of the Academies, applicable legislation and Church safeguarding standards. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Board shall ensure that safeguarding remains central to the mission, values and operation of the Academies and that effective safeguarding arrangements are established, implemented and maintained.

The Board of Directors shall promote a culture in which safeguarding is recognised as a fundamental responsibility and shall support safeguarding leadership throughout the organisation. The Board may delegate specific safeguarding functions to committees, officers or designated personnel. Such delegation shall not diminish the Board's overall responsibility for safeguarding governance and accountability.

The Board of Directors shall report to the Territorial Director of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ on matters regarding safeguarding performance, compliance, and risk management. Members of the Board shall undertake safeguarding training appropriate to their governance responsibilities and shall maintain sufficient knowledge and understanding to discharge their duties effectively.

Executive Director and Directors

Responsibility for the operational implementation of this Policy rests with the Executive Director and the academies' leadership. The Executive Director shall ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effectively implemented across all of the academies' activities and shall provide leadership in promoting a culture of safeguarding, accountability and continuous improvement. The Executive Director shall ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are clearly allocated, understood and supported by appropriate resources, training and supervision.

The Directors shall ensure that safeguarding requirements are incorporated into educational provision, boarding operations, pastoral care, extracurricular activities and all other aspects of Academy life. Safeguarding considerations shall inform operational planning, staffing arrangements, risk management processes and organisational decision-making.

The Directors shall promote an environment in which safeguarding concerns can be raised openly and addressed promptly. They shall support safeguarding personnel in the exercise of their responsibilities and shall cooperate fully in the management of safeguarding concerns and safeguarding reviews.

The Executive Director shall report regularly to the Board regarding safeguarding performance, compliance, risks and improvement activities and shall ensure that safeguarding remains a standing matter within organisational reporting arrangements.

Safeguarding Committee

The Academies shall maintain a Safeguarding Committee to support the development, implementation and review of safeguarding arrangements. The Committee shall provide oversight, advice and challenge in relation to safeguarding matters and shall support the continuous improvement of safeguarding practice throughout the organisation. The Committee shall monitor safeguarding trends, review safeguarding reports and consider the findings of audits, compliance reviews and serious incident reviews.

The Committee shall contribute to the development of safeguarding strategy and shall make recommendations regarding policy development, training priorities, risk management and safeguarding improvement initiatives. While the Committee performs an important advisory and oversight function, responsibility for safeguarding decisions shall remain with the appropriate governance and management authorities.

The membership, terms of reference and operating procedures of the Committee shall be defined separately and reviewed periodically to ensure effectiveness.

Director of Safeguarding

The Director of Safeguarding provides professional leadership for safeguarding throughout the Academies and is responsible for supporting the effective implementation of safeguarding arrangements. The Director of Safeguarding shall oversee safeguarding systems, provide professional advice, support safeguarding personnel and promote consistent safeguarding practice across the organisation. The Director shall support policy development, safeguarding training, compliance activities and organisational learning.

The Director of Safeguarding shall monitor safeguarding performance and shall identify areas requiring improvement, support or intervention. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Director shall work closely with the DLP, Academy leadership, safeguarding personnel and relevant external agencies. The Director shall contribute to safeguarding audits, compliance reviews, strategic planning and governance reporting and shall support the development of safeguarding culture throughout the organisation.

The Director of Safeguarding shall have sufficient authority, independence and access to leadership to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person

The Designated Liaison Person serves as the primary point of contact for safeguarding concerns and plays a central role in the management of safeguarding information, reporting processes and liaison with statutory authorities. The Designated Liaison Person shall receive safeguarding concerns, assess safeguarding information, coordinate referrals and maintain appropriate safeguarding records. The Designated Liaison Person shall ensure that safeguarding concerns are managed in accordance with legal requirements, safeguarding standards and organisational procedures.

The Designated Liaison Person shall provide advice and support to personnel regarding safeguarding matters and shall promote awareness of reporting responsibilities throughout the organisation.

A Deputy Designated Liaison Person shall be appointed to provide support and continuity and to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities when the Designated Liaison Person is unavailable.

The responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person are set out in greater detail within the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.

Local Safeguarding Representative

The Academies recognise the important role played by the local safeguarding representative in promoting child protection and safeguarding awareness. He/she shall fulfil the responsibilities arising under applicable legislation and shall cooperate fully with safeguarding reporting and referral processes.

The Academies shall ensure that the mandated person receives appropriate training and support in the discharge of his/her responsibilities.

The Local safeguarding representative provides an important point of contact within Academy communities and contributes to the promotion of safeguarding awareness, safeguarding culture and local safeguarding implementation.

The representative shall support the dissemination of safeguarding information and shall encourage engagement with safeguarding initiatives and reporting arrangements.

Mandated persons and the local safeguarding representative shall operate within clearly defined safeguarding structures and shall cooperate closely with the Designated Liaison Person, safeguarding leadership and Academy management.

Other mandated persons

All staff, whether classified as mandated persons or not, share responsibility for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of students within Oak Ireland. Mandated Persons have legal obligations to report child protection concerns that meet the threshold for harm; assist Tusla in the assessment of child protection concerns where requested; and maintain awareness of safeguarding legislation, policy, and reporting procedures.

Within Oak Ireland, Mandated Persons include:

- Teachers
- Deans Managers / Boarding Staff Manager
- Head of Houses
- Deans / Boarding Staff
- Coworkers / Staff Volunteers
- Chaplain
- Consecrated Women
- Psychologist
- Other designated personnel whose roles involve direct responsibility for children.



Dublin Oak, Boy's Campus.

SECTION 2

SAFE ENVIRONMENTS, SAFEGUARDING AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS

Safeguarding Risk Management Framework

Effective safeguarding requires the identification, assessment and management of risks that may affect the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children. Oak Ireland recognises that safeguarding risks arise in a variety of contexts and that the effective management of such risks is an essential component of good governance, responsible leadership and organisational accountability.

The Academies shall maintain a comprehensive safeguarding risk management framework designed to support the creation and maintenance of safe educational and residential environments. The purpose of this framework is to identify circumstances that may expose children to harm, assess the likelihood and potential impact of such risks and implement appropriate measures to prevent, mitigate or manage those risks.

Safeguarding risk management shall form an integral part of organisational governance and shall be embedded within strategic planning, operational management, programme development and decision-making processes. Safeguarding considerations shall not be treated as a separate or isolated function but shall inform all activities involving children and young people.

Responsibility for safeguarding risk management is shared throughout the organisation. While specific responsibilities are assigned to leaders and safeguarding personnel, every member of staff, volunteer and person acting on behalf of the Academies has a responsibility to remain alert to safeguarding risks and to contribute to the maintenance of safe environments.

The Academies shall adopt a proactive approach to safeguarding risk management. Risks shall be identified and addressed before harm occurs wherever possible. This approach requires ongoing vigilance, regular review of safeguarding arrangements and a willingness to adapt safeguarding measures in response to changing circumstances, emerging risks and lessons learned from safeguarding incidents.

Particular attention shall be given to environments and activities that may present elevated safeguarding risks. These include boarding accommodation, residential activities, educational visits, international travel, sporting activities, online environments, pastoral activities, one-to-one interactions and activities delivered by external providers. Safeguarding considerations shall be incorporated into the planning, approval and review of such activities.

The Academies shall maintain safeguarding risk registers that identify significant safeguarding risks, existing control measures, areas requiring improvement and actions necessary to strengthen safeguarding arrangements. Risk registers shall be reviewed periodically and shall inform governance reporting, safeguarding planning and organisational decision-making.

Safeguarding risk management shall also take account of the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of children. The Academies recognise that certain children may face additional risks arising from age, disability, special educational needs, family circumstances, cultural factors, boarding arrangements, international student status or other personal circumstances. Safeguarding assessments shall therefore consider individual needs and vulnerabilities when determining appropriate protective measures.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, risk assessments shall be undertaken to support decision-making and to determine whether additional safeguarding measures are required. Such assessments shall be proportionate, evidence-informed and subject to review as circumstances change.

The effectiveness of safeguarding risk management arrangements shall be evaluated through audits, compliance reviews, safeguarding reports, incident reviews and other assurance mechanisms established by the Academies. Findings arising from these processes shall inform continuous improvement and support the ongoing development of safeguarding systems and controls.

Child Safeguarding Statement

Oak Ireland shall maintain a Child Safeguarding Statement in accordance with applicable legal requirements and recognised safeguarding standards. The Child Safeguarding Statement serves as a public declaration of the Academy's commitment to safeguarding and outlines the measures adopted to manage safeguarding risks and protect children from harm. The current Child Safeguarding Statement is available as a separate document in the Academies' webpages or through this link:

(Child Safeguarding Statement).

Safeguarding Reviews and Continuous Improvement

Oak Ireland is committed to the continuous improvement of safeguarding practice. The Academies recognise that safeguarding is an evolving area that requires regular review, reflection and adaptation to ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain effective and responsive to the needs of children.

Safeguarding systems, policies and procedures shall be reviewed periodically to assess their effectiveness and to identify opportunities for improvement. Reviews shall be informed by safeguarding experience, changes in legislation and guidance, audit findings, incident reviews, stakeholder feedback and developments in safeguarding practice. Safeguarding reviews may be undertaken at organisational, local or activity-specific level depending upon the nature of the issues under consideration. Such reviews may examine governance arrangements, safeguarding culture, risk management processes, training effectiveness, boarding provision, reporting systems or other aspects of safeguarding practice. The findings of safeguarding reviews shall be reported through appropriate governance channels and shall inform organisational planning and resource allocation. Where improvements are identified, action plans shall be developed and monitored to ensure that recommendations are implemented effectively.

The Board of Directors and Academy leadership shall receive appropriate assurance regarding the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and shall support the implementation of improvement measures where required. Through a commitment to reflection, accountability and continuous improvement, the Academies seek to ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain effective, proportionate and centred upon the welfare and well-being of children.

Safe Environment Standards

Oak Ireland is committed to creating and maintaining environments in which children are protected from harm and supported in their educational, personal, social, emotional and spiritual development. Safe environments are fundamental to effective safeguarding and are essential to the fulfilment of the Academy's educational and pastoral mission.

A safe environment is one in which safeguarding considerations are integrated into the planning, organisation and delivery of all activities involving children.

Such environments are characterised by clear expectations, appropriate supervision, professional conduct, effective leadership and a culture in which the welfare of children is prioritised at all times.

The Academies recognise that safeguarding risks may arise in a wide variety of settings, including classrooms, boarding facilities, recreational spaces, online environments, sporting activities, educational visits and pastoral programmes. Safeguarding arrangements shall therefore be designed to address the particular risks associated with each environment and activity while promoting positive relationships, participation and wellbeing. All Academy premises, facilities and activities shall be managed in a manner that supports the safety and welfare of children. Consideration shall be given to physical safety, emotional wellbeing, privacy, supervision arrangements and safeguarding risks when planning, reviewing and developing Academy facilities and programmes.

The Academies shall maintain appropriate systems for identifying and addressing environmental risks that may affect children. Where safeguarding concerns are identified, reasonable measures shall be implemented to reduce risk and strengthen safeguarding protections.

Boarding Safeguarding

The residential nature of boarding education creates unique opportunities for personal development, community life and student support. It also gives rise to safeguarding responsibilities that extend beyond those normally associated with day-school provision. Oak Ireland recognises that boarding students entrust significant aspects of their daily lives to the Academies and that this relationship requires particularly robust safeguarding arrangements.

The Academies shall maintain boarding environments that are safe, nurturing and respectful of the dignity, wellbeing and developmental needs of students. Safeguarding considerations shall be integrated into all aspects of boarding provision, including supervision, accommodation arrangements, pastoral care, recreation, travel, healthcare and student support. Boarding arrangements shall be designed to promote both safety and wellbeing. Students shall have access to trusted adults, appropriate support structures and opportunities to raise concerns. The Academies shall seek to foster a boarding culture characterised by respect, inclusion, personal responsibility and mutual care.

Safeguarding arrangements within boarding facilities shall take account of the particular vulnerabilities that may arise in residential settings, including separation from family, interpersonal relationships, peer dynamics, privacy considerations and extended contact with staff and other students. Appropriate measures shall be implemented to manage these risks while supporting positive residential experiences.

Boarding staff shall receive safeguarding training appropriate to their responsibilities and shall be supported in maintaining safe and professional relationships with students. Safeguarding responsibilities shall be integrated into boarding management, supervision arrangements and daily practice. The welfare of boarding students shall be monitored regularly through pastoral systems, wellbeing supports and safeguarding oversight arrangements. Particular attention shall be given to students who may require additional support because of personal circumstances, vulnerabilities or safeguarding concerns. Detailed boarding procedures are contained within the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.

Student Welfare

Effective supervision is essential to safeguarding and plays a critical role in promoting student welfare, preventing harm and responding appropriately to concerns. The Academies shall maintain supervision arrangements that are proportionate to the age, maturity, needs and circumstances of students and that reflect the nature of the activities being undertaken.

Supervision arrangements shall be planned carefully and reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain appropriate and effective. Consideration shall be given to the number of students involved, the environment in which activities take place, identified safeguarding risks and any individual needs that may require additional support.

Supervision is not solely a matter of physical oversight. It also involves maintaining awareness of student wellbeing, recognising changes in behaviour, identifying emerging concerns and ensuring that students have access to support when required.

Staff and boarding personnel shall remain attentive to indicators that a student may be experiencing difficulties, distress or safeguarding concerns.

The Academies recognise that positive relationships between students and staff are an important component of effective safeguarding. Such relationships shall be characterised by professionalism, respect and appropriate boundaries and shall contribute to the creation of environments in which students feel safe, supported and valued.

Individual Support and one to one contact

The Academies recognise that there are many legitimate educational, pastoral, welfare and safeguarding reasons for staff to meet individually with students. Such interactions can provide important opportunities for support, guidance and relationship building. At the same time, one-to-one situations require appropriate safeguards to protect both students and personnel.

Individual meetings shall be conducted in a manner that promotes transparency, accountability and safety. The location, timing and circumstances of meetings shall be appropriate to their purpose and consistent with safeguarding requirements.

Personnel shall exercise professional judgement when engaging in one-to-one interactions and shall remain mindful of the need to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Wherever possible, arrangements should minimise the potential for misunderstanding, isolation or vulnerability while preserving the privacy and dignity necessary for effective support.

Particular care shall be taken where students are experiencing emotional distress, safeguarding concerns or other circumstances that may increase vulnerability. Supportive relationships are an important element of safeguarding; however, such relationships must always remain professional, appropriate and accountable.

The Academies shall maintain procedures governing one-to-one interactions and shall provide guidance to personnel regarding good safeguarding practice in individual support situations.

Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

The Academies shall provide pastoral structures designed to support students in their educational, emotional, social and personal development. These structures shall seek to promote resilience, healthy relationships, personal responsibility and emotional well-being while ensuring that appropriate support is available to students experiencing difficulties.

Pastoral care shall be delivered in a manner consistent with safeguarding principles and shall complement formal safeguarding arrangements.

Personnel engaged in pastoral support shall remain alert to safeguarding concerns and shall cooperate fully with safeguarding processes where concerns arise.

Students shall be encouraged to seek support when needed and shall have access to trusted adults who can assist them in addressing concerns, challenges and personal difficulties. The Academies shall seek to foster an environment in which students feel comfortable discussing matters affecting their wellbeing and confident that concerns will be treated seriously and appropriately.

Pastoral systems shall operate alongside safeguarding structures and shall contribute to the early identification of concerns, the promotion of wellbeing and the creation of positive educational and residential environments.

International Students

Oak Ireland recognises that international students may face unique challenges arising from geographical distance from family, cultural adjustment, language differences and reliance upon Academy structures for day-to-day support and guidance. These circumstances may create additional safeguarding considerations that require careful planning and oversight. The Academies shall ensure that safeguarding arrangements for international students reflect their particular circumstances and support their welfare, wellbeing and integration into Academy life. Appropriate arrangements shall be maintained to ensure that students have access to pastoral support, safeguarding personnel and trusted adults capable of responding to concerns and providing assistance when required.

The Academies recognise that international students may experience periods of increased vulnerability, particularly during travel, holidays, emergencies or significant personal transitions. Safeguarding arrangements shall therefore seek to ensure continuity of support and appropriate oversight during such periods.

Educational visits, trips and residential activities

Educational visits, excursions, trips, sporting activities and residential programmes form an important part of Academy life and provide valuable opportunities for learning, personal growth and community building. The Academies are committed to ensuring that such activities are planned and delivered in a manner that promotes both safety and safeguarding.

Safeguarding considerations shall form an integral part of the planning, approval and review of all off-site activities.

Organisers shall consider the nature of the activity, the characteristics of participating students, environmental factors, supervision arrangements and any safeguarding risks that may arise. Appropriate measures shall be implemented to protect students during travel, accommodation, activities and periods of free time. Personnel participating in educational visits shall understand their safeguarding responsibilities and shall be prepared to respond appropriately to concerns that may arise. Particular attention shall therefore be given to supervision, communication, accommodation arrangements, emergency planning and the management of individual student needs.

International Travel and Overseas Activities

International travel can provide valuable educational, cultural and personal development opportunities. At the same time, overseas activities may present safeguarding risks that differ from those encountered within the Academy environment. Oak Ireland shall therefore ensure that safeguarding considerations are fully integrated into the planning, approval and management of international travel.

All international activities shall be subject to appropriate safeguarding oversight and risk assessment. Planning shall consider travel arrangements, accommodation, supervision, local conditions, communication systems, medical support, emergency procedures and any safeguarding risks that may reasonably arise during the programme.

The Academies shall seek to ensure that students travelling internationally remain appropriately supervised and supported throughout the duration of the activity. Staff participating in overseas programmes shall understand their safeguarding responsibilities and shall be prepared to respond effectively to safeguarding concerns, emergencies or incidents that may occur while abroad. Where activities involve third-party organisations, host families, educational institutions or external providers, appropriate due diligence shall be undertaken to ensure that safeguarding standards are maintained and that risks are appropriately managed.

The welfare of students shall remain the primary consideration throughout all stages of international travel. Decisions concerning programme design, supervision arrangements and emergency responses shall be guided by safeguarding considerations and the best interests of participating students.

Transport and Travel with Students

Transport arrangements frequently form part of educational, sporting, boarding and extracurricular activities. Transport involving students shall be organised and conducted in a manner that promotes safety, accountability and transparency. Appropriate consideration shall be given to supervision arrangements, journey planning, communication systems and any safeguarding risks associated with the activity.

Particular care shall be taken where circumstances require limited numbers of students and adults to travel together. In such situations, transparency, documentation and adherence to established procedures are especially important. The Academies shall maintain procedures governing transport arrangements and shall ensure that personnel understand the safeguarding expectations associated with transporting students.

Online Safety and Digital Environments

Digital technologies play an important role in education, communication and student development. Oak Ireland is committed to promoting safe, responsible and appropriate use of technology throughout all Academy activities. Online safety forms an integral component of the safeguarding framework and shall be addressed through education, supervision, policy development and risk management.

Students shall be supported in developing the knowledge, skills and judgement necessary to engage safely with digital technologies. Educational programmes shall promote awareness of online risks and encourage responsible behaviour in digital environments. Personnel shall model appropriate digital conduct and shall use technology in a manner consistent with professional responsibilities and safeguarding requirements. Digital communication with students shall remain transparent, appropriate and capable of accountability.

The Academies recognise that online harms may include cyberbullying, harassment, exploitation, grooming, exposure to harmful content, inappropriate communication and misuse of personal information. Safeguarding arrangements shall seek to address these risks through preventative measures, education, monitoring and appropriate responses to concerns.

Where online safeguarding concerns arise, they shall be managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures and with due regard for the welfare of the student involved. The Academies shall cooperate with parents, guardians, statutory authorities and other relevant agencies where necessary to protect students from online harm.

Photography, Media and the Use of Images

The Academies recognise the educational, pastoral and promotional value of photography, audio-visual recordings and other media. At the same time, the creation and use of images involving children requires careful consideration of safeguarding, privacy and data protection obligations.

Images and recordings of students shall only be created, retained and used for legitimate purposes that are consistent with the educational mission of the Academies and the welfare of students. The dignity, privacy and safety of children shall remain central considerations in all decisions relating to the use of images and media.

Personnel shall exercise professional judgement when taking, storing, sharing or publishing images of students. Particular care shall be taken to ensure that images are not used in a manner that may expose children to safeguarding risks, compromise privacy or undermine the dignity of those depicted.

The Academies shall maintain appropriate controls governing the storage, retention and publication of images and recordings. Such controls shall reflect safeguarding requirements, data protection obligations and recognised good practice.

Students and parents shall be provided with information regarding the use of images and recordings, and the Academies shall seek to ensure that media activities are conducted in a transparent and accountable manner.

External Organisations and Third-Party Providers

The Academies frequently engage with external organisations, contractors, educational partners, activity providers and other third parties whose services contribute to educational and extracurricular programmes. While such partnerships may provide valuable opportunities for students, they also require careful safeguarding oversight. Oak Ireland shall take reasonable steps to satisfy itself that external organisations operating on behalf of, within or in partnership with the Academies maintain safeguarding arrangements that are appropriate to the nature of their activities and consistent with the welfare of children.

Before engaging external providers, the Academies shall consider relevant safeguarding information and assess whether appropriate safeguarding measures are in place. The level of scrutiny applied shall be proportionate to the nature of the activity, the degree of contact with children and any safeguarding risks associated with the proposed engagement.

External providers shall be expected to cooperate with Academy safeguarding arrangements and to comply with applicable safeguarding requirements while participating in Academy activities. Where concerns arise regarding the safeguarding practices of a provider, the Academies shall take appropriate action to address those concerns and, where necessary, suspend or terminate the engagement.

The use of third-party providers shall never diminish the safeguarding responsibilities of the Academies. Responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students remains with the Academies throughout all activities conducted under their authority or auspices.



Dublin Oak Academy students enjoying a sunny day at the beach.

Recruitment, vetting and people management

Oak Ireland is committed to recruiting, selecting and retaining personnel who are suitable to work with children and who share the Academy's commitment to safeguarding and child welfare. Safe recruitment forms a fundamental component of the safeguarding framework and contributes significantly to the prevention of abuse and the creation of safe environments.

The Academies recognise that safeguarding begins before an individual enters employment or assumes responsibilities involving children. Recruitment processes shall therefore be designed to assess suitability, integrity, competence and alignment with the values and safeguarding expectations of the organisation. All appointments shall be made following recruitment processes that are fair, transparent and proportionate to the responsibilities of the role. Recruitment decisions shall take account of safeguarding considerations and shall seek to identify any information relevant to an applicant's suitability to work with children.

Safeguarding responsibilities shall be reflected within recruitment documentation, role descriptions and appointment processes. Candidates shall be informed of the Academy's safeguarding expectations and of the standards of conduct required of all personnel. The Academies shall maintain recruitment procedures that support consistency, accountability and compliance with legal and safeguarding requirements. Detailed recruitment processes and supporting documentation are contained within the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.

Vetting and Suitability Assessment

Vetting arrangements form an important component of the broader safeguarding framework and support informed decision-making during recruitment and engagement processes. Appropriate vetting shall be completed in accordance with applicable legal requirements and organisational procedures. The Academies shall ensure that relevant checks are completed before individuals undertake duties involving children, except in exceptional circumstances where alternative safeguarding measures have been approved and documented.

Vetting information shall be considered carefully and fairly, taking account of the nature of the role, the information disclosed and the safeguarding responsibilities associated with the position. Decisions concerning suitability shall be informed by safeguarding considerations and professional judgement.

The Academies may require periodic re-vetting where appropriate and shall maintain arrangements for monitoring ongoing suitability. Personnel are expected to cooperate fully with vetting requirements and to disclose information relevant to their continued suitability where required by law or organisational policy. Vetting forms one element of safer recruitment and shall be considered alongside references, interviews, qualifications, safeguarding declarations and other relevant information when assessing suitability for appointment or engagement.

Re-vetting and ongoing suitability

Safeguarding is an ongoing responsibility that extends beyond the point of recruitment and initial appointment. Oak Ireland recognises that the suitability of personnel to work with children must be monitored throughout the duration of their engagement with the Academies.

The Academies shall maintain arrangements for the periodic review of suitability and shall undertake re-vetting in accordance with legal requirements, organisational policy and recognised safeguarding practice. Re-vetting forms part of a broader approach to safeguarding assurance and shall be considered alongside supervision, training, performance management and professional conduct.

Personnel are expected to cooperate fully with re-vetting requirements and to provide information relevant to their suitability where such disclosure is required by law, contractual obligations or safeguarding policy. Individuals who become aware of circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children have a responsibility to bring such matters to the attention of the appropriate Academy authority without undue delay. Information arising through re-vetting processes shall be managed fairly, sensitively and confidentially. Any concerns identified shall be assessed in accordance with safeguarding principles, legal requirements and the welfare of children. Where necessary, safeguarding measures may be implemented pending the completion of assessments or reviews.

The Academies reserve the right to review an individual's suitability at any time where safeguarding concerns arise or where information becomes available that may affect the individual's ability to fulfil responsibilities involving children.

Coworkers and Volunteers

Coworkers and Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the educational, pastoral, sporting and community life of Oak Ireland. Individuals engaged as coworkers or in voluntary service shall be selected, supervised and supported in a manner proportionate to the nature of their responsibilities and the degree of contact they may have with the students. Safeguarding considerations shall be incorporated into the coworker or volunteer recruitment, induction, training and supervision arrangements.

Coworkers and Volunteers shall be informed of their safeguarding responsibilities and shall be expected to comply fully with this Policy and all associated safeguarding requirements. They shall receive guidance appropriate to their role and shall understand the procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns and seeking advice.

Where safeguarding concerns arise in relation to a coworker or a volunteer, such concerns shall be managed in accordance with the safeguarding procedures applicable to the circumstances of the case.

Inductions and Safeguarding Orientation

The Academies recognise that effective safeguarding requires personnel to understand both their responsibilities and the safeguarding culture of the organisation. Induction therefore forms an essential component of the safeguarding framework and provides the foundation for safe and effective practice.

All personnel shall receive safeguarding induction appropriate to their role and responsibilities. Induction shall introduce individuals to the safeguarding values, policies, reporting arrangements and standards of conduct that govern Academy activities. The purpose of induction is not merely to communicate information but to ensure that individuals understand their responsibilities and are equipped to contribute positively to the safeguarding culture of the Academies.

Personnel shall be provided with opportunities to seek clarification, discuss safeguarding expectations and become familiar with relevant safeguarding contacts and support structures.

Induction shall occur before or as soon as practicable following the commencement of duties and shall be supplemented by ongoing training, supervision and professional development. The Academies shall maintain records demonstrating that safeguarding induction requirements have been completed and that personnel have acknowledged their safeguarding responsibilities.

Safeguarding Training and Professional Development

Training is a critical element of effective safeguarding and supports the development of knowledge, skills and professional judgement necessary to protect children and respond appropriately to concerns. Oak Ireland is committed to maintaining a comprehensive safeguarding training framework that reflects the diverse responsibilities of personnel throughout the organisation.

Safeguarding training shall be provided at a level appropriate to the role, responsibilities and degree of contact with children. The Academies recognise that safeguarding competence develops over time and requires ongoing learning, reflection and engagement with emerging safeguarding issues. Training programmes shall seek to promote a consistent understanding of safeguarding principles, reporting responsibilities, professional boundaries, risk management and child welfare. Particular attention shall be given to the responsibilities of safeguarding personnel, boarding staff, leaders, mandated persons and those who exercise specific safeguarding functions.

The Academies shall maintain appropriate records of safeguarding training and shall monitor participation to ensure that safeguarding competence is sustained throughout the organisation.

Professional conduct and safeguarding boundaries

Standards of Professional Conduct

Professional conduct requires more than compliance with rules and procedures. It requires the exercise of sound judgement, integrity, accountability and respect in all interactions with students, families and colleagues. Personnel are expected to recognise the position of trust they hold and to exercise that trust responsibly. All interactions with children shall be guided by respect for the dignity, rights and wellbeing of the child.

Behaviour that compromises safety, undermines trust or creates unnecessary safeguarding risks is inconsistent with the values and expectations of Oak Ireland and shall not be tolerated.

Personnel shall remain mindful that professional conduct extends beyond direct interactions with students and includes behaviour within boarding environments, online activity, communications, social settings and any context in which an individual's actions may affect children or the reputation of the Academies. The Academies shall promote a culture in which professional standards are understood, supported and reinforced through leadership, supervision, training and accountability.

Professional Boundaries

Healthy and appropriate relationships between adults and students are essential to effective education, pastoral care and safeguarding. At the same time, clear professional boundaries are necessary to protect both children and personnel and to maintain confidence in safeguarding arrangements.

Professional boundaries support transparency, accountability and safeguarding. Personnel shall avoid situations that may create actual or perceived conflicts of interest, dependency, favouritism or inappropriate familiarity. Particular care shall be exercised in boarding environments and other settings where staff may have extensive contact with students outside formal educational activities.

The Academies recognise that boundary issues are not always clear-cut and may require the exercise of professional judgement. Personnel who are uncertain about the appropriateness of a particular course of action should seek guidance from safeguarding personnel or Academy leadership.

The maintenance of professional boundaries protects children, supports healthy educational relationships and contributes to a culture of safeguarding throughout the organisation.

Personnel shall remain aware of the inherent power imbalance that exists between adults and children and shall exercise their authority responsibly and sensitively. Relationships that create dependency, compromise professional objectivity or blur professional boundaries are inconsistent with the safeguarding expectations of the Academies. Particular care shall be exercised in boarding environments, where staff and students may interact frequently across a wide range of educational, recreational and residential settings. While boarding life naturally involves greater levels of contact and interaction, the standards of professional conduct expected of personnel remain unchanged.

The Academies are committed to fostering positive relationships that support student development while maintaining the safeguards necessary to protect both students and personnel.

Physical Contact and Personal Care

Physical contact may arise legitimately in educational, pastoral, sporting, medical, welfare and safeguarding contexts. Appropriate physical contact can provide reassurance, support, guidance or assistance and may form a normal part of interactions with children and young people.

Any physical contact with a student shall always be appropriate, proportionate, respectful and responsive to the needs of the student. The dignity, comfort and wellbeing of the child shall remain central considerations when determining whether physical contact is necessary or appropriate. Personnel shall remain sensitive to the individual circumstances, age, developmental stage and preferences of students and shall exercise professional judgement when providing assistance or support that involves physical contact. Students should, wherever practicable, understand the nature and purpose of the assistance being provided.

Personal care arrangements shall be managed with particular attention to dignity, privacy and safeguarding. Where personal care support is required, the Academies shall ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place and that support is provided in a manner that promotes the welfare and rights of the student.

The Academies recognise that misunderstandings may arise in relation to physical contact. Personnel shall therefore exercise caution, maintain transparency and follow established procedures designed to protect both students and staff.

Digital Communications

Digital communication forms an important part of contemporary educational and residential life. Electronic communication can support learning, facilitate communication and enhance student engagement. At the same time, it presents safeguarding considerations that require careful management and professional judgement.

Communication between personnel and students through electronic means shall be conducted in a manner that is transparent, appropriate and capable of accountability. Digital communication shall support legitimate educational, pastoral or safeguarding purposes and shall reflect the same standards of professionalism expected in face-to-face interactions.

Personnel shall remain mindful that electronic communications create permanent records and may be interpreted differently from intended. Communications should therefore be clear, respectful and consistent with professional responsibilities.

The Academies recognise that the boundary between personal and professional communication may become blurred in digital environments. Personnel are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times and to avoid forms of communication that may compromise safeguarding, create unnecessary risks or undermine confidence in professional relationships.

Social Media and Online Conduct

Social media has become an important aspect of communication and personal expression. Personnel shall conduct themselves online in a manner consistent with the values and expectations of Oak Ireland. Behaviour in digital environments should reflect the same standards of professionalism, integrity and respect expected in other aspects of Academy life.

Personnel are therefore expected to exercise sound judgement when engaging with social media and to consider how online activity may affect students, colleagues, families and the wider Academy community. Particular care shall be exercised where online interactions involve students or former students. Personnel shall remain mindful of professional boundaries and shall avoid conduct that may create safeguarding concerns, conflicts of interest or reputational risks.

The Academies shall provide guidance regarding social media use and shall review online conduct expectations periodically in light of evolving technologies and safeguarding challenges.

Gifts, Hospitality and Favouritism

Relationships with students should be characterised by fairness, consistency and impartiality. While gestures of appreciation and hospitality may occasionally arise in educational communities, such interactions require careful consideration to ensure that professional boundaries are maintained.

Personnel shall avoid actions that may create actual or perceived favouritism, dependency or preferential treatment. Decisions affecting students shall be based upon objective educational, pastoral or welfare considerations and shall not be influenced by personal relationships or other inappropriate factors.

The giving or receiving of gifts should be approached with caution and professional judgement. While many gifts may be entirely innocent and appropriate, circumstances may arise in which gifts create misunderstandings, expectations or concerns regarding professional boundaries.

The Academies shall promote transparency and accountability in relation to gifts and hospitality and shall maintain procedures designed to protect both students and personnel from situations that could compromise safeguarding standards.

Professional relationships should always remain focused upon the welfare, development and educational interests of students.

Boarding School Conduct

The residential nature of boarding education creates unique relationships and responsibilities. Boarding personnel play a significant role in the daily lives of students and often provide support across educational, pastoral, recreational and residential contexts. These responsibilities require particularly high standards of professional conduct and safeguarding awareness.

Boarding personnel shall conduct themselves in a manner that promotes trust, respect, accountability and student wellbeing. Professional relationships shall remain consistent with the safeguarding expectations established by this Policy and shall support healthy boundaries within residential life.

The Academies recognise that boarding environments require staff to exercise professional judgement in situations that may not arise within traditional educational settings. Personnel shall therefore remain attentive to issues relating to privacy, supervision, personal support, room access, recreational activities and informal interactions with students. The welfare of boarding students shall remain central to all aspects of residential life. Boarding staff shall seek to create environments characterised by respect, inclusion, safety and personal responsibility while maintaining the safeguards necessary to protect children and young people from harm.

All personnel and boarding staff shall model safeguarding values and promote a culture in which concerns are recognised, discussed and addressed appropriately. The effectiveness of boarding safeguarding arrangements shall be reviewed regularly through supervision, audits, student feedback, safeguarding reviews and other assurance processes.

Recognising, responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding Awareness and Recognition of Harm

The effective protection of children depends upon the ability of adults to recognise concerns and respond appropriately. Oak Ireland is committed to ensuring that personnel possess the awareness, knowledge and confidence necessary to identify situations in which a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation or other forms of harm.

Safeguarding concerns may arise in many different ways. They may emerge through direct disclosures, observations, behavioural indicators, information provided by third parties, patterns of concern or circumstances suggesting that a child may be vulnerable or at risk. Concerns may relate to current events, historical experiences or situations involving risks of future harm. The Academies recognise that children do not always communicate concerns directly and that indicators of harm may be subtle, complex or open to interpretation. Personnel are therefore expected to remain vigilant, exercise professional judgement and seek advice whenever uncertainty exists regarding the welfare of

Safeguarding awareness is not limited to the identification of abuse. It also includes recognising circumstances that may adversely affect a child's wellbeing, development or safety.

Personnel shall remain attentive to changes in behaviour, emotional wellbeing, relationships, attendance, participation or other factors that may indicate a need for support or safeguarding intervention.

The Academies shall provide training and guidance to support the recognition of safeguarding concerns and shall promote a culture in which concerns are discussed openly and reported appropriately.

Responding to Disclosures and Safeguarding Concerns

Children and young people may disclose safeguarding concerns in a variety of ways and in circumstances that are often unexpected. Disclosures may occur directly or indirectly and may relate to experiences of abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, inappropriate conduct or concerns regarding the welfare of another child. The manner in which adults respond to such disclosures can have a significant impact on the child's wellbeing and on the effectiveness of subsequent safeguarding interventions.

Oak Ireland is committed to ensuring that all safeguarding concerns are treated seriously, responded to appropriately and managed in a manner that prioritises the welfare and dignity of the child. Personnel who receive a disclosure or become aware of a safeguarding concern shall respond calmly, respectfully and without judgement. Children should be listened to attentively and reassured that their concerns have been heard and will be taken seriously.

The role of personnel receiving a disclosure is not to investigate allegations or establish facts but to ensure that safeguarding information is communicated appropriately through established safeguarding channels. Personnel shall avoid actions that could compromise future safeguarding processes or place additional pressure upon the child.

The Academies recognise that disclosures may be emotionally challenging for both the child and the adult receiving the information. Appropriate support shall therefore be available to personnel involved in safeguarding processes, while ensuring that safeguarding responsibilities continue to be discharged effectively. Where concerns arise regarding the welfare of a child, the priority shall be to ensure that the information is reported promptly and that appropriate safeguarding measures are considered without unnecessary delay.

Internal Reporting of Safeguarding Concerns

The Academies shall maintain clear and accessible reporting arrangements to ensure that safeguarding concerns are communicated promptly and managed appropriately. Effective reporting is essential to safeguarding and enables concerns to be assessed, recorded and addressed in a timely manner.

All personnel have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns that come to their attention. This responsibility applies regardless of the source of the information and whether the concern relates to a student, member of staff, volunteer, contractor or any other individual connected with Academy activities.

The reporting framework of the Academies is designed to encourage the timely sharing of safeguarding information and to ensure that concerns are reviewed by personnel with appropriate safeguarding expertise. Individuals should not assume that another person will report a concern or delay reporting while seeking additional information. The Academies are committed to fostering a culture in which safeguarding concerns can be raised openly and responsibly. Personnel who report concerns in good faith shall be supported and treated fairly throughout safeguarding processes.

Internal reporting arrangements shall be communicated clearly to students, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.

The Academies shall seek to ensure that all members of the Academy community understand how safeguarding concerns can be raised and how reports will be managed. The Designated Liaison Person shall maintain oversight of safeguarding reporting arrangements and shall ensure that safeguarding information is managed in accordance with legal requirements, organisational procedures and the welfare of children.

Statutory Reporting and Engagement with Civil Authorities

Oak Ireland is committed to cooperating fully with statutory agencies and to fulfilling all legal obligations relating to safeguarding reporting and child protection. Where safeguarding concerns reach the threshold for statutory reporting, the Academies shall ensure that reports are made promptly and in accordance with applicable legal requirements. Decisions regarding statutory reporting shall be informed by safeguarding information, professional judgement and relevant legislative obligations.

The Academies recognise that statutory reporting serves an important protective function and supports the wider child protection system. Reporting obligations shall therefore be approached with seriousness, diligence and a commitment to acting in the best interests of children. Where reports are made to statutory authorities, the Academies shall cooperate fully with any subsequent enquiries, assessments or investigations. Personnel shall provide information and assistance as required, subject to applicable legal and safeguarding considerations.

The existence of an internal safeguarding process shall not replace, delay or diminish statutory reporting obligations. Internal and external safeguarding processes shall operate in a complementary manner and shall be guided by the welfare of the child.

The Academies shall maintain constructive working relationships with statutory agencies and shall seek to support collaborative approaches to safeguarding wherever appropriate.

Safeguarding Concerns Involving Clergy, Consecrated Members and Church Personnel

As educational institutions operating under the direction of the Legionaries of Christ, the Academies recognise that safeguarding concerns may occasionally involve clergy, consecrated members or other individuals who are subject to ecclesiastical authority. Where such concerns arise, the Academies shall ensure that appropriate safeguarding action is taken and that all statutory reporting obligations are fulfilled. The existence of Church processes shall not diminish the responsibility to protect children or comply with civil law requirements.

Safeguarding concerns involving Church personnel shall be managed with the same seriousness, objectivity and commitment to child welfare that applies to all safeguarding concerns. Decisions shall be informed by safeguarding considerations and the welfare of children rather than by status, position or organisational affiliation.

The Academies shall cooperate with Church safeguarding authorities and shall support the implementation of any safeguarding measures required to protect children and manage risk. Canonical processes shall be respected while ensuring that civil safeguarding obligations remain paramount.

The management of safeguarding concerns involving Church personnel shall reflect the principles of accountability, transparency, fairness and respect for all persons involved.

Confidentiality and the Sharing of Safeguarding Information

The Academies recognise the importance of confidentiality in safeguarding work and acknowledge that safeguarding information is often sensitive, personal and capable of affecting the lives of those involved. Appropriate handling of information is therefore essential to effective safeguarding practice.

Confidentiality does not mean secrecy. Safeguarding information shall be shared where necessary to protect children, fulfil legal obligations, support safeguarding decision-making or enable appropriate interventions. Information shall be shared responsibly and only with those who have a legitimate need to know.

The Academies shall seek to strike an appropriate balance between respecting privacy and ensuring that relevant safeguarding information is available to those responsible for protecting children. Decisions concerning information sharing shall be guided by safeguarding principles, legal requirements and professional judgement.

The Academies shall maintain procedures governing the collection, storage, sharing and retention of safeguarding information and shall provide guidance to personnel regarding the responsible management of safeguarding records. Where uncertainty exists regarding the sharing of safeguarding information, advice should be sought from safeguarding personnel before decisions are made.

Managing allegations and safeguarding concerns involving personnel

Oak Ireland recognises that allegations and safeguarding concerns involving personnel present significant safeguarding, welfare, legal and reputational considerations. Such concerns require careful management to ensure that children are protected, safeguarding risks are addressed appropriately, and all individuals are treated fairly throughout the process.

The Academies are committed to responding to allegations in a manner that is child-centred, proportionate, transparent and consistent with the principles of natural justice. Safeguarding considerations shall remain paramount, while recognising that allegations may have profound consequences for all individuals involved. The existence of an allegation does not in itself establish wrongdoing. Equally, uncertainty regarding facts or outcomes shall not prevent the Academies from taking reasonable safeguarding measures where necessary to protect children. Safeguarding decision-making often requires action before all relevant information is available and shall therefore be guided by risk assessment, professional judgement and the welfare of children.

The Academies shall ensure that concerns are assessed promptly and that appropriate action is taken without unnecessary delay. Responses shall be proportionate to the nature of the concern and informed by safeguarding expertise, legal obligations and the circumstances of the case.

Throughout all safeguarding processes, the dignity, privacy and rights of those involved shall be respected while ensuring that the protection of children remains the primary consideration.

Allegations Against Employees

Employees occupy positions of trust and responsibility within the Academy community. Allegations involving employees therefore require careful consideration and robust safeguarding oversight. Where concerns arise regarding the conduct of an employee towards a child, the Academies shall assess the matter promptly and determine what safeguarding measures, if any, are required. Assessments shall consider the nature of the allegation, available information, potential safeguarding risks and any immediate protective actions necessary to safeguard children.

The Academies recognise that allegations may arise from a wide range of circumstances and may vary significantly in seriousness and complexity. Responses shall therefore be proportionate and shall seek to balance safeguarding requirements with fairness and procedural integrity. Where appropriate, concerns may be referred to statutory authorities, professional bodies or other relevant agencies. Internal processes shall be managed in a manner that supports safeguarding objectives while avoiding unnecessary interference with external investigations or proceedings.

Employees who become subject to safeguarding concerns shall be treated fairly and shall be informed of relevant processes to the extent compatible with safeguarding requirements and legal obligations.

The Academies shall maintain procedures governing the management of allegations against employees and shall ensure that safeguarding considerations remain central throughout all stages of the process.

Allegations Against Volunteers, Contractors and External Personnel

Safeguarding concerns may also arise in relation to volunteers, contractors, visiting personnel or individuals engaged through external organisations. Concerns involving such individuals shall be assessed and managed in accordance with safeguarding principles and with due regard for the nature of the relationship between the individual and the Academies. Appropriate safeguarding measures may be implemented where necessary to protect children and manage risk.

Where concerns involve individuals employed or engaged by external organisations, the Academies shall cooperate appropriately with those organisations while ensuring that safeguarding responsibilities are fulfilled. Information may be shared where necessary to protect children, comply with legal obligations or support safeguarding processes.

The welfare of children shall remain the primary consideration in determining appropriate responses to safeguarding concerns involving external personnel. The Academies shall maintain procedures that support the consistent and effective management of safeguarding concerns involving non-employees.

Allegations Involving Clergy and Consecrated Members

The Academies acknowledge that safeguarding concerns involving clergy, consecrated members or other Church personnel require careful management and may involve both civil and ecclesiastical responsibilities. Where such concerns arise, safeguarding action shall be guided by the welfare of children, statutory requirements and recognised safeguarding standards. The status or role of an individual within the Church shall not diminish the seriousness with which safeguarding concerns are addressed.

The Academies shall ensure that appropriate reporting obligations are fulfilled and shall cooperate with Church safeguarding authorities and canonical processes. Such cooperation shall complement, and never replace, compliance with civil safeguarding obligations.

Safeguarding concerns involving Church personnel shall be managed transparently and consistently and shall be subject to the same safeguarding principles that apply to concerns involving any other individual. The Academies remain committed to accountability, fairness and the protection of children in all safeguarding matters.

Immediate Protective Measures

The primary purpose of safeguarding intervention is the protection of children. Where safeguarding concerns indicate that a child may be exposed to risk, the Academies may implement protective measures pending the outcome of assessments, investigations or other safeguarding processes.

Protective measures are precautionary in nature and do not imply guilt, wrongdoing or predetermined outcomes. Their purpose is to manage safeguarding risk and to ensure that children remain safe while relevant information is considered.

The nature of any protective measures shall be determined according to the circumstances of the case and shall be informed by safeguarding risk assessment, professional advice and organisational responsibilities.

Protective measures shall be proportionate, documented and subject to regular review. The Academies shall seek to ensure that such measures remain appropriate to the level of identified risk and are adjusted where circumstances change.

The implementation of safeguarding measures shall be guided by the welfare of children while also respecting the rights and dignity of individuals affected by safeguarding decisions.

Administrative Leave and Temporary Restrictions

There may be circumstances in which safeguarding concerns require temporary adjustments to an individual's duties, responsibilities or access to Academy activities. Such measures may be necessary to protect children, preserve the integrity of safeguarding processes or manage identified safeguarding risks.

Administrative leave and other temporary restrictions are neutral safeguarding measures and shall not be interpreted as disciplinary sanctions or indicators of guilt. Decisions regarding such measures shall be based upon safeguarding considerations and the need to ensure that appropriate protections remain in place.

The Academies shall ensure that decisions regarding temporary restrictions are proportionate, justified and subject to regular review. Individuals affected by such measures shall be treated respectfully and shall be provided with information regarding the safeguarding process insofar as this is compatible with legal and safeguarding requirements.

The duration and scope of any restrictions shall be reviewed periodically and adjusted where appropriate in light of emerging information, safeguarding assessments or changes in circumstances.

Detailed guidance regarding administrative leave and temporary safeguarding restrictions is contained within the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.

Support for Complainants and Affected Persons

The Academies recognise that individuals who raise safeguarding concerns or who are affected by safeguarding matters may require support, information and reassurance throughout safeguarding processes. Safeguarding concerns can have significant emotional, personal and practical consequences for children, families and other individuals involved. The Academies shall therefore seek to ensure that support is available and that individuals are treated with dignity, compassion and respect.

Support arrangements shall be appropriate to the circumstances and shall take account of safeguarding considerations, individual needs and available resources. The nature of support provided may vary depending upon the circumstances of the case and the role of the individual concerned.

The provision of support shall not compromise safeguarding processes or prejudice the fair management of concerns. Rather, support forms part of the Academy's commitment to humane, responsible and child-centred safeguarding practice.

The welfare of children shall remain the primary consideration when determining appropriate support arrangements.

Support for Respondents

The Academies recognise that safeguarding allegations and concerns can have a profound impact on those who become the subject of safeguarding processes. Individuals who are the subject of concerns shall therefore be treated fairly and respectfully while safeguarding requirements are addressed.

The existence of a safeguarding concern does not determine the outcome of any investigation, assessment or process. Respondents shall be afforded appropriate procedural protections and shall be informed of relevant processes to the extent compatible with safeguarding obligations and legal requirements.

Support may be offered to respondents where appropriate, recognising the personal and professional challenges that safeguarding processes may create. The provision of support does not diminish the seriousness of safeguarding concerns nor alter the Academy's responsibility to protect children.

Safeguarding decisions shall be informed by evidence, professional judgement and risk assessment rather than assumption or speculation. Throughout safeguarding processes, the Academies shall seek to maintain standards of fairness, dignity and accountability.

The welfare of children shall remain the paramount consideration in all safeguarding decisions.

Risk Assessment during case management

As has been seen, risk assessment is a central component of safeguarding decision-making and supports the identification, evaluation and management of risks arising during safeguarding processes. Where allegations or safeguarding concerns are received, the Academies shall undertake ongoing assessments of safeguarding risk and shall review protective measures as necessary. Risk assessments shall consider the welfare of children, the nature of the concerns, available information and the effectiveness of existing safeguards.

Safeguarding risk assessment is a dynamic process. Assessments shall be reviewed as circumstances evolve and as additional information becomes available. Decisions shall be documented appropriately and shall be capable of review and accountability.

The purpose of safeguarding risk assessment is not to determine guilt or innocence but to support informed safeguarding decisions and to ensure that children remain protected while concerns are being addressed.

Risk assessments shall inform decisions regarding supervision arrangements, access to children, participation in activities, temporary restrictions and other safeguarding measures that may be required.

Through effective risk assessment, the Academies seek to ensure that safeguarding interventions remain proportionate, evidence-informed and centred upon the welfare and protection of children.

Safeguarding Records, Information Management and Confidentiality

Oak Ireland shall maintain safeguarding records that are accurate, factual, timely, secure and confidential, ensuring that they support effective safeguarding practice, accountability, appropriate information sharing and the protection and welfare of children. Safeguarding records shall document concerns, decisions, actions and relevant communications and shall be maintained with due regard for privacy, dignity and applicable legal requirements. Where appropriate, safeguarding records shall be stored separately from general student records and access shall be restricted to authorised personnel with legitimate safeguarding responsibilities. The Academies recognise that safeguarding records may become important sources of information in future safeguarding processes, investigations, reviews or legal proceedings; therefore, records shall be objective, comprehensive and retained in accordance with legal obligations, safeguarding standards and the record management procedures set out in the Safeguarding Implementation Manual. The creation, maintenance and secure management of safeguarding records are essential components of Oak Ireland's safeguarding framework and contribute directly to its effectiveness, integrity and accountability.

Information Sharing and Access to Safeguarding Information

The effective protection of children often depends upon the timely and appropriate sharing of information. Oak Ireland recognises that safeguarding information may need to be shared with relevant individuals, agencies or authorities in order to protect children, assess risks or fulfil legal obligations.

The Academies shall seek to ensure that information is shared responsibly and only with individuals who have a legitimate safeguarding interest or legal entitlement to receive it. Access to safeguarding information shall be restricted appropriately and shall reflect the sensitivity of the information concerned.

The sharing of safeguarding information requires careful professional judgement. Personnel shall remain mindful that both inappropriate disclosure and inappropriate withholding of information may adversely affect safeguarding outcomes.

Where uncertainty exists, advice should be sought from safeguarding personnel before decisions are made.

Retention, Archiving and Disposal of Safeguarding Records

The Academies recognise that historical safeguarding information may become relevant to future concerns, reviews, investigations or legal proceedings. Accordingly, safeguarding records shall not be destroyed prematurely and shall be managed in a manner that preserves their integrity and accessibility throughout the applicable retention period.

Data Protection and Privacy

Safeguarding and data protection are complementary objectives. The protection of personal information supports trust, dignity and accountability, while effective safeguarding may require the collection, use and sharing of information necessary to protect children from harm.

Personal information obtained through safeguarding processes shall be collected and managed only where there is a legitimate safeguarding, legal or organisational purpose. Information shall be handled responsibly and protected against unauthorised access, disclosure, alteration or loss. The Academies shall implement appropriate technical, organisational and administrative measures to support the secure management of safeguarding information. Such measures shall reflect the sensitivity of safeguarding records and the potential impact of inappropriate disclosure.

Nothing within this Policy shall prevent the sharing of information where such sharing is necessary to protect a child, comply with legal obligations or support safeguarding interventions. Data protection considerations shall inform safeguarding decision-making but shall not be interpreted in a manner that compromises child protection responsibilities.

The Academies shall provide guidance and training to personnel regarding the intersection of safeguarding and data protection and shall seek to promote responsible information management throughout the Academies.

Cooperation with statutory, regulatory and church authorities

Cooperation with Statutory Authorities

The Academies shall cooperate fully with statutory authorities exercising responsibilities in relation to child protection, child welfare, criminal investigation, education, health or other matters affecting the safety and wellbeing of children. Such cooperation shall be guided by legal obligations, safeguarding principles and the best interests of children.

Where statutory authorities undertake assessments, investigations or reviews, the Academies shall provide appropriate assistance and shall facilitate access to relevant information, personnel and records in accordance with legal requirements. Personnel shall cooperate professionally and responsibly with statutory processes and shall seek to support safeguarding outcomes.

Cooperation with statutory agencies shall be characterised by openness, professionalism, respect and a shared commitment to the welfare of children.

Cooperation with Church Safeguarding Authorities

The Academies shall cooperate with Church safeguarding structures, safeguarding reviews and safeguarding initiatives undertaken by competent ecclesiastical authorities. Such cooperation shall support the development and maintenance of effective safeguarding arrangements and contribute to the promotion of safeguarding culture throughout the wider apostolate.

Where safeguarding concerns involve individuals subject to ecclesiastical authority, the Academies shall engage appropriately with Church safeguarding personnel while ensuring that statutory obligations and child protection responsibilities are fulfilled fully and without delay.

Church safeguarding engagement shall be characterised by transparency, accountability and a shared commitment to the protection of children. Cooperation with Church authorities shall complement civil safeguarding responsibilities and shall not be

regarded as an alternative to statutory reporting or engagement with public authorities.

The Academies remain committed to maintaining safeguarding arrangements that satisfy both civil safeguarding requirements and recognised Church safeguarding standards.

Engagement with Professional Advisers and External Specialists

Where appropriate, the Academies may engage suitably qualified external professionals to support safeguarding decision-making, risk assessment, investigations, reviews, training, policy development or organisational learning. The use of external expertise does not diminish the safeguarding responsibilities of the Academies. Responsibility for safeguarding decisions remains with the appropriate governance and management structures of the Academies.

External professionals engaged by the Academies shall be expected to operate in accordance with relevant legal, ethical and professional standards and to respect safeguarding requirements, confidentiality obligations and organisational policies. The Academies recognise that independent perspectives can contribute significantly to safeguarding effectiveness and shall remain open to seeking external advice where doing so may enhance child protection, governance or organisational accountability.

Safeguarding assurance, monitoring and continuous improvement

Safeguarding assurance refers to the processes through which the Academies evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and satisfy themselves that children are being protected appropriately. Effective assurance supports accountability, informs decision-making and promotes confidence in safeguarding systems.

Oak Ireland shall maintain a safeguarding assurance framework designed to provide governance bodies, leaders and stakeholders with reliable information regarding safeguarding performance and compliance. The framework shall support the identification of strengths, weaknesses, emerging risks and opportunities for improvement.

Safeguarding assurance shall draw upon a range of information sources, including safeguarding reports, risk assessments, audits, training records, safeguarding reviews, student feedback, parental engagement, compliance activities and external evaluations. The Board of Directors shall receive sufficient assurance to enable it to discharge its governance responsibilities and to satisfy itself that safeguarding arrangements remain effective and appropriate.

Safeguarding Audits and Self-Assessment

Regular evaluation is essential to the maintenance of high safeguarding standards. The Academies shall therefore undertake periodic safeguarding audits and self-assessment activities to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding systems and identify opportunities for improvement.

Safeguarding audits shall examine governance arrangements, policies, procedures, safeguarding culture, training, reporting systems, record management, boarding provision and other aspects of safeguarding practice. The scope and frequency of audits shall be determined by organisational needs, safeguarding risks and governance requirements. The purpose of audit activity is not solely to identify deficiencies but also to recognise effective practice and support organisational learning. Audit findings shall be considered constructively and used to strengthen safeguarding arrangements.

Audit outcomes shall be reported through appropriate governance structures and shall inform safeguarding planning, risk management and resource allocation.

Safeguarding Reporting and Governance Oversight

Effective governance requires access to reliable safeguarding information. The Academies shall maintain reporting arrangements that enable safeguarding information to be communicated appropriately to leaders, governance bodies and safeguarding personnel.

Safeguarding reports shall provide information regarding safeguarding activity, training, compliance, incidents, risk management, audits and other matters relevant to safeguarding oversight. Reporting arrangements shall support informed decision-making and enable governance bodies to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Reports shall be prepared and presented in a manner that protects confidentiality while providing sufficient information to support oversight and accountability. Safeguarding reporting shall focus on trends, learning, risk management and organisational improvement rather than solely on individual cases.

The Board of Directors shall receive regular safeguarding reports and shall review safeguarding performance as part of its governance responsibilities. Leaders shall ensure that safeguarding remains a standing consideration within governance and management processes.

The Academies recognise that effective reporting contributes to transparency, accountability and safeguarding culture and shall maintain arrangements that support meaningful governance oversight.

Policy review, approval and implementation

Review of the Policy

This Policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains effective, relevant and consistent with legal requirements, safeguarding standards and organisational needs. Reviews shall take account of legislative developments, safeguarding guidance, organisational experience and learning arising from safeguarding activities.

The review process shall provide an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and to identify any amendments necessary to strengthen the protection and well-being of children.

Where significant safeguarding developments occur, the Academies may undertake interim reviews or amendments outside the normal review cycle.

Approval and Ratification

The safeguarding framework of Oak Ireland requires clear governance ownership and accountability. This Policy shall therefore be subject to formal approval and ratification through the governance structures of the Academies and the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ.

Approval signifies the commitment of the organisation to implementing the standards and requirements contained within this Manual and to providing the leadership, resources and oversight necessary to support effective safeguarding practice.

The Territorial Director of the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ shall maintain responsibility for approving and overseeing this Policy and shall ensure that safeguarding remains central to organisational governance and strategic decision-making.

Publication and Accessibility

The Academies are committed to ensuring that safeguarding information is accessible to those who require it. This Policy shall be communicated appropriately throughout the organisation and shall be available to personnel, students, parents, guardians and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Safeguarding information shall be presented in formats that support understanding and engagement and shall be supplemented by guidance materials, procedures, training and awareness initiatives.

The Academies shall take reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding policies remain visible, accessible and integrated into the daily life of Academy communities.

Commencement and Implementation

This Policy takes effect from the date of approval by the Territorial Director of the Congregation of Legionaries of Christ and shall remain in force until amended, replaced or withdrawn.

The successful implementation of this Policy requires the active participation of governors, leaders, staff, volunteers, contractors, parents, guardians and students. Every member of the Academy community has a role to play in promoting the welfare, dignity and protection of children.

Oak Ireland affirms its commitment to maintaining educational and residential environments in which children are safe, respected and supported to flourish. Through the implementation of this Policy and the wider safeguarding framework, the Academies seek to uphold the highest standards of safeguarding and to ensure that the welfare of children remains at the heart of all organisational activity.



A culture of trust,
respect and protection.

*Safeguarding is a shared responsibility
across the Oak Ireland community*



**SAFE
ENVIRONMENTS**

OAK IRELAND

Woodlands Academy • Dublin Oak Academy