

Child Safeguarding Statement

OAK IRELAND: Woodlands Academy – Dublin Oak Academy

This Child Safety Statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children's First Act 2015 and is derived from A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024. The policy of the Catholic Church in Ireland is based on standards of practice accompanied by criteria that assist in reaching these standards and which can be used in assessing and managing risk. It outlines our commitment to safeguarding children and the measures we have in place across the Legionaries of Christ's institutions in Ireland.

The Legionaries of Christ, as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, exists to promote the teachings and mission of the Catholic Church. As part of this mission, it works with children through Oak Ireland, an institution of the Legionaries of Christ comprising two academies. Woodlands Academy and Dublin Oak Academy are international, private, boarding schools in Ireland that strive to provide the most appropriate environment, facilities, educational and sports programs, and personnel to achieve an Integral Formation of young men and women as Christian leaders. Our education is rooted in the living Catholic tradition of academic excellence, personal integrity, high moral standards and a spirit of service to others. It aims to offer each student the key to his personal happiness and fulfilment in this life and the next step of their lives. Females only reside at Woodlands Academy (all girls school) and males only reside at Dublin Oak Academy (all boys school).

There are currently 107 students residing at Woodlands Academy for the 2026-2027 academic Year. Woodlands has a capacity for 120 students. There are 15 non-resident teachers at the Academy teaching the students the Secondary school Irish Curriculum, including one non-resident Catholic formation teacher; two resident Catholic formation teachers; 6 Religious Volunteers (consecrated Regnum Christi women); and 8 Boarding staff whom reside on site. The students study the Irish Curriculum during the school day, followed by sports/activities each day, with one outing per week on a Sunday, outside the Academy.

There are currently 92 students residing at Dublin Oak Academy for the 2026-2027 academic Year. Dublin Oak has a capacity for 110 students. There are 12 non-resident teachers, including one Catholic formation teacher; and 8 Boarding staff who reside on site. The students study the Irish Curriculum during the school day, followed by sports/activities each day, with one outing per week on a Sunday, outside the Academy.

During the year, the students participate in two main trips as part of their Tuition and have the choice to participate in four other optional trips within Europe. All students also have the choice to participate in at least one, maximum of two (students who stay for the full programme from September to June) friendship weekends in Ireland, as authorised by parents/guardians. If students do not participate in the optional trips or friendship weekends, they reside at the Academy (if there are at least five students not participating as informed to parents, otherwise they would return home) and take part in organised activities and outings during this period. For students who do not participate in the trips, they stay at the Academy and share rooms with the other students who stay (so they are not alone in bedrooms without friends) and take part in a full scheduled itinerary, sent to their parents also with details of who is in charge so they can be in touch with staff at the Academy with any queries. Students are supervised at all times.

Name and contact details of the service provider

<i>Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ</i> <i>Address:</i> The Brow, Glencap Commons North, Kilmacanogue, Co Wicklow A98YP83 <i>Telephone:</i> (353) 1 295 5902	<i>Oak Ireland</i> <i>Woodlands Academy</i> <i>Address:</i> Wingfield House, Kilmacanogue, Co.Wicklow, A98FK10 <i>Telephone:</i> (353) 1 286 6323 <i>Dublin Oak Academy</i> <i>Address:</i> Kilcroney Castle, Kilmacanogue, Co.Wicklow, A98TO21 <i>Telephone:</i> (353) 1 286 3290
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Statement

The Gospel teaches the importance of ensuring that the Catholic Church community is a warm, welcoming and safe place for children.

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Mark 10:14-15)

Children are gifts from God, to be cherished and recognised for the joyful contribution they make as valued members of the Church.

Our challenge is to follow the example of Jesus in cherishing them. Safeguarding is key to this important task and should be seen, not as a burden, but as an opportunity to embrace and encourage children's ministry, following the example of Jesus Christ.

The Legionaries of Christ pledges to safeguard children and young people from harm and to support them in their development as valued and integral members of the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Church's ministry will be inclusive and will uphold their rights.

Consistent with Gospel values, and with civil and criminal law, those who minister will do so with dignity and integrity, honouring their calling to ensure that children and young people are welcomed, cherished and protected, following the example set by Jesus.

The Safeguarding Children Policy will be honoured and complied with by all ordained clerics, by vowed female and male religious, and by all lay staff and volunteers in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Definition of Harm

As defined in the Children First Act 2015, “Harm” means, in relation to a child: (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or (b) sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise’. Please refer to section 2 of the Children’s Safeguarding Policy for Oak Ireland (Recognising, responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns) and the Safeguarding Implementation Manual, for guidance surrounding the types of harm and recognition of, response to and reporting concerns that a child has been abused, is being abused or is at risk of abuse.

Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

The Legionaries of Christ as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes working with children at our Oak Ireland institutions at Woodlands Academy, and Dublin Oak Academy. As defined in A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024:

Through the academies, all personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) engage with the students at different times throughout the day and supervision is provided at all times during all aspects of the day, for example: meals, mass participation, sports activities, classroom, outside shower rooms, participation in friendship weekend, and trips abroad (this list is not exhaustive).

As outlined in the A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024 we are committed to the following standards:

- **Leadership, Governance and Accountability.**
As a leader, the Legionaries of Christ embodies and imparts the Catholic Church’s vision, principles and values, which are reflected and apparent in the child safeguarding culture, structures and practices at all levels and in all ministries with children and young people. This demonstrates, through words and actions, the Territorial Director’s personal commitment to fulfil the safeguarding mission of the Church.
- **Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding.**
Ensuring the creation and maintenance of a culture of safety, including a safe Church environment that is welcoming of children. Keeping children safe from harm is an imperative but more than that, the Academies will promote the well-being of children through their participation in the ministry of the Church. The Academies will create and maintain environments that uphold children’s rights and that create nurturing, caring conditions where children will flourish in faith and love. Through fostering a culture of care, children feel safe and looked after and, in turn, they will be supportive of and respectful to their peers.
- **Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law.**
Caring for complainants and ensuring a just process of inquiry. Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Legionaries of Christ and/or the Academies will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All Church personnel have a responsibility to report suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child abuse that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) can assist with this process. These reports will be made irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation being reported relates to a lay member of Church personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation being reported relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

Oak Ireland Child Safeguarding team contact information:

Role	Name	Contact
Director of Safeguarding	Sofia Martinez, Director of Child Safety, Oak Ireland	0052 554820 6824 smartinez@rcsa.mx
Designated Liaison Person (DLP)	Lisa Homan, General Manager Oak Ireland	+353 863 210 602 lhoman@oakireland.org
Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP)	Jacinta Curran, Training & Development Officer, Oak Ireland	+353 852 160 159 jcurran@oakireland.org
Child Safeguarding Representative	Abraham Sabag, Co-curricular Program Manager, Oak Ireland	+353 852 160 126 asabag@oakireland.org
Relevant Person	Lisa Homan, General Manager, Oak Ireland	+353 863 210 602 lhoman@oakireland.org

As outlined in the Oak Ireland Safeguarding Children 2026 Policy we are committed to the following principles:

- ***Mandatory reporting***

Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused:

- *Physically*
- *Emotionally*
- *Sexually*
- *Through neglect*

- ***Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them***

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse and that create nurturing, caring conditions for children and the adults who work with them, will continue to

be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training support, communications and quality assurance.

- ***Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations***

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Legionaries of Christ Institutions in Ireland will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation relates to a lay member of Legionaries of Christ personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority.

If the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Legionaries of Christ Authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All personnel will co-operate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

- ***Caring pastorally for complainants and other affected persons***

Those who have suffered child abuse by Legionaries of Christ Personnel will receive a compassionate and just response, and will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support as they seek to rebuild their lives. An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order and to the wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

- ***Caring pastorally for respondents and other affected persons***

The Legionaries of Christ in its response to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child sexual abuse will respect the rights under civil law and canon law of an accused cleric or religious or other Legionaries of Christ personnel. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered to the respondent.

The Legionaries of Christ will take responsibility for ensuring that any cleric or religious who is considered to constitute a danger to children is managed according to a risk management plan. All requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child. Respondents belong to families and diocesan or religious communities. The Legionaries of Christ will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in activities at Oak Ireland Academies – Dublin Oak Academy and Woodlands Academy and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse. There is a procedure in place for all potential risks outlined below.

Risk Identified	Practices and Procedures in place to manage identified risk
Potential risk of abuse of harm (as defined by Children First act of 2015) to the boarders by a member of staff, including sexual abuse, as they could be exposed through their involvement in group activities, outings or trips.	Safe selection and recruitment procedures for all personnel, including mandatory Garda vetting for all to work and/or reside on campus with the children. Children and their parents are aware of the safety procedures in place before arrival to the Academy. Schedules in place ensure children are not alone as all activities/classes/trips are group team based. If a child is on their own with an adult this would be for Dialogue (conversation//tutoring between an adult supervisor and child) – in this regard Dialogue is firstly authorised by parents in a consent form signed on registration and acceptance to the academy. All offices throughout the building have glass panels for child safety. Dialogue (one to one meeting with a trained adult teacher for spiritual or personal formation) is always in an open place, not separated or apart from the main school and a log is kept. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
Those who work with children could engage in unsafe work practices or behave inappropriately towards them, including harming a child physically, psychologically, or emotionally.	All staff are aware that Child Safety is a priority at both Academies. This is the first topic discussed at the weekly General Meeting with representatives of residential and non-residential departments present. Minutes are issued to all employees working at the Academy. All staff complete the Tusla online e-learning programme and submit their certificate issued to the Child Safeguarding Representative. All staff must have Garda Vetting clearance All employment contracts are subject to Garda Vetting clearance. All staff are issued with the Child Safety Policy and are asked to sign a form to acknowledging receipt of the Academy's Child Safety policy. All staff receive Code of Conduct training by the Director of Safeguarding (in person in September or remotely through video if employment starts outside the beginning of the academic year) before commencement of their role. An acknowledgement of this Code of Conduct will be signed by all staff after completing the training and kept on each staff's personnel file, through the Bizimply employment app. All staff are aware from policy regarding the different types of abuse and how this is not tolerated at the Academy. Employee Handbook is provided to all employees on commencement of their employment. All employees are required to sign an acknowledgement confirming receipt of the handbook, through the Bizimply employment app. Staff are aware Appropriate communication with children (including use of social media). 'Who to tell' signs are visible at the Academy in prominent

	areas (also in Spanish) so that all children are aware they can talk to either their House leader/supervisor or a specific member of the Child Safety team at the Academy if they have a concern. Following graduation, Parental consent is then required for supervisors to remain in touch with children under 18 through social media/email. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
Children could be at risk of bullying by a member of staff/volunteer/another child	An Anti -Bullying policy in operation and all students are aware, as well as parents and staff. House team leaders also have bullying as a topic discussed frequently so that all are aware it is not tolerated. Rules and Regulations issued to parents and children before arrival to the school and families are asked to go through this with their children before arrival so it is clear that they understand the Academy have a zero-tolerance bullying policy in operation. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual and the Student's Handbook.
Woodlands Academy -Children could be at Risk of harm or abuse while an external organisation (Prodigy Tennis) leases the sports complex, adjacent to the main building, as members of the public drop and collect their children off to the tennis sports complex at Woodlands Academy. Dublin Oak Academy & Woodlands Academy – Children could be at risk of harm or abuse while an external organisation (Filming companies who lease the property) Dublin Oak Academy & Woodlands Academy – Children could be at risk of harm or abuse if strangers enter the property with no authorisation.	A meeting is held at the beginning of the year with the external organisation with Management and risks discussed. It is clearly outlined that no parents of players being dropped off or collected go beyond a certain point which is signposted. Prodigy Tennis are also advised to ensure they send notice to their players families to drive slowly in and out of the Academy entrance, to avoid any accidents. For any joint activities with Prodigy Tennis with students at the Academy, all such activities are fully supervised by Woodlands Academy personnel. Filming by external companies is only authorised when students are off site – either when away on trips or the period of closure to students from mid June to the beginning of summer camp in July. The main gate at each campus is timed to close daily at a certain time and only personnel (all whom have garda clearance) have the codes for the gate. All personnel are informed that if any stranger is on site that they notice to walk up to them and let them know it is not possible to be on site without an appointment and to contact a member of the Leadership Team immediately. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
Children could be at Risk of harm or abuse in the context of online safety	A specialised Child Safety assembly is held by the Directors in each Academy campus at the beginning of each school year. Also, Parents are informed that they must take responsibility for monitoring their children's social media/email accounts to ensure safety in this regard. Internet Safety filters/network firewalls are set up and in use at the Academy to prevent unauthorized Internet use. Phones are kept in secured lockers at all times and only given out during scheduled phone calls/internet as per Academy schedules and all parents are aware of this. A specific course is also given to students by the Oak Ireland Psychologist at both campuses to educate the students. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.

Children could be at risk of harm of abuse while away on trips	All trips are planned with the safety of the children as priority. This includes increased supervision, detailed planning with supervisors, rules set out and explained to staff step by step (hourly information) on the groups itinerary during this period, including an assembly for all children to explain to stay with their team leader at all times with the main group and covering all rules of the trip. No student is alone with an adult and students share a room with at least one other fellow students. Safety rules are explained to students clearly the week of departure and parents are notified of same. Parents and students receive an explanation that in particular if a child leaves their dormitory after lights out, they are expelled from the next scheduled trip, as it is for their own safety. Safety rules per trip are explained clearly to supervisors before each trip by the General Manager (DLP) and DDLP. This is an indepth meeting, also covering Conduct expected from staff in terms of behaviour and supervision. No supervisor is allowed to enter a child's bedroom unless it is an emergency/medications required etc and if so, this is communicated to the group leader on a group whatsapp so all are aware. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
During a viral/sickness/contagious outbreak, children could be at risk as placed in isolation	During viral outbreaks at the Academies, a child must isolate for a specific amount of time, as directed by the Academy doctor. Students reside in dormitories in isolation wings set up to accommodate the situation using the spaces we have at each Academy campus. The Academy Management team work with the Academy GP and the Department of Public Health, following all guidelines and instructions given. In a case of an outbreak the Department of Public Health provide the Academies with instructions to follow - where to place students, whether alone if symptomatic or as a group if more than 1 student ill etc. Students are given their mobile phones during this time, so they can keep in touch with family and families are notified. Meals are provided in an area where other symptomatic or students are and students are checked on regularly by the day nurse and agency nurse or dean on duty at night time if nurse not in place. Students mental health is priority and walks outside, talking to family and friends through their phone or ipad are important to the team. The academy works with the families to ensure the best care is given to students in this regard, considering their mental health. Students are monitored during the day and night by the Boarding staff and nurse and have their mobile phones for any emergencies.
Those working with children could operate in unsafe environments.	Proper procedures in place when arranging outings, activities and trips. All personnel given copy of the Code of Conduct for Adults working with children, on commencement of specific role. Code of Conduct training is provided by the Director of Safe Environments to all staff in person at the beginning of the Academic year and remotely to those who start employment outside this date.

	Full risk assessments are carried out before all outings and trips. All information communicated to all teams at weekly general meetings on both campuses each week by the General Manager and Operations Assistant. Extra precautions/supervision put in place, in the case of high risk activities (e.g. rollercoaster park, ski, swimming etc.)
Lack of clarity as to who is responsible for what, when it comes to child safeguarding and protection in the Legion of Christ Institutions.	Roles and responsibilities are clearly laid out in this document. A short training session is provided by the Safeguarding Committee to personnel on site at the beginning of the year. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
Children involved in group activities may not understand what is expected of them in terms of their contact with and behaviour towards each other.	Adults who work with children expected to be good role models for them. Child Safety assembly in place for all students at the beginning of the year. Visible 'who to tell' signs in place. Anti-bullying campaigns in place. Child Safety Hubs in place 'Growing Safe Campaign' where students can post something in writing if they are not happy to speak to somebody. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual and the Student's Handbook.

Concerns that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected may go undetected or unreported.	The Legion of Christ Child Safeguarding policy and procedures are circulated to all personnel. Tusla Elearning Childrens First module is completed by all personnel. Code of Conduct training is completed by all personnel. Safeguarding information is provided. Safeguarding Statement is conveyed to the public through the website.
Personnel, whether mandated persons or others, may be unaware of their responsibility, or not supported, to report concerns that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.	Reporting thresholds and procedures are set out in the Child Safeguarding policy document and explained by National Safeguarding Board trainer each September where a full session is given to all personnel. Joint reports will be made by DLP and Mandated Persons, where appropriate, taking account of data protection requirements. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
Mandated persons may not be aware of their responsibilities under the Children's First Act 2015.	Role of mandated persons is described in the Child Safeguarding policy document.
Safeguarding practice in Legion of Christ Institutions/programmes may not be implemented.	Self-audits carried out once per year by Child Safeguarding Committee. External audits by National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland are carried out as requested. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.

Procedures

All procedures outlined in the risk assessment above are available in the Child Safeguarding Policy document and the Safeguarding Implementation Manual, available at Oak Ireland. Please contact the Relevant Person at

Oak Ireland, Lisa Homan (lhoman@oakireland.org) if you wish to obtain a copy. This is sent to all personnel at the beginning of the year.

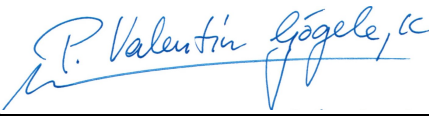
The Child Safeguarding policy document (recently updated as of 2026) is also available to view on the Academy website and physical copies are also available from the DLP, DDLP and Safeguarding Representative's offices.

The procedures listed above include the following:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/ volunteers of a child availing of our service. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person. Please refer to the Safeguarding Implementation Manual.

Implementation

The Legionaries of Christ is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of *the Child Safety Policy, the Student's Handbook, the Safeguarding Implementation Manual and the Code of Conduct*. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice, support our desire to keep children safe from harm while residing at our Academies in Ireland. As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate. This statement has been communicated to all staff and volunteers at Oak Ireland, as well as all parents/guardians of the current Academic Year. It is available to members of the public through each Academy website www.woodlands-academy.org and www.dublinoakacademy.org. This statement will be displayed clearly in the Reception area of Dublin Oak Academy (Castle, Club, Gym, Dormitory Buildings) and Woodlands Academy (main house and sports complex building).

Signed: 
Fr. Valentin Gögele
Territorial Director
Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ

Date: 5 September 2026

For any queries relating to this statement please contact Lisa Homan, Relevant Person, Oak Ireland. Email: lhoman@oakireland.org (Contact No: Mobile No. 086 3210602, Woodlands Academy Campus - 01 2866323, Dublin Oak Academy Campus 01 2863290.