

Trinity Student Counselling Services Child Safeguarding Statement

The Trinity Student Counselling Services, which sits within Student Services in the Corporate Services Division, is comprised of Counselling, Student Learning Development (SLD) and Student 2 Student (S2S), all supported by a central Administration Team.

The Service delivers psychological therapy, social transition and academic skills services across the student body using a stepped care model. SCS contributes to the University's key strategic objectives such as student transition and retention, accessibility, diversity and internationalisation.

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. It outlines our services and the principles and procedures we follow to ensure, as far as practicable and with regard to students' use of our services, that we promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm in order that they may develop and achieve their full potential.

Mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns that reach a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports in the interests of safety.

This Child Safeguarding Statement applies to all paid staff, volunteers, visitors, facilitators, guests, and students on work placement within the organisation. All affiliated persons with SCS must abide by these child safeguarding procedures.

The Organisation

Student Counselling Services, including Student Counselling, Student2Student (S2S) and Student Learning Development (SLD)

Locations: Trinity College Dublin, 7-9 Sth. Leinster Street, Dublin 2
House 47, Main Campus, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin 2
Trinity Halls, Dartry Rd, Darty, Dublin 6
Other Trinity campus locations, as required

Our Services:

- Scheduling of telephone, video and in-person appointments by our Administration Team.
- Assessment and counselling to undergraduate and postgraduate Trinity College Students.
- Group therapy/workshop provision.

- Online therapeutic programmes (Silver Cloud).
- Facilitation of clinical placement experience for trainee psychologists/psychotherapists.
- Student to Student mentor and peer support.
- Training workshops.
- Crisis management as required.
- Education and outreach prevention.
- In-person and online academic support, both on a 1:1 basis and through provision of workshops.

SCS commits to safeguarding children, young people & vulnerable adults we work with in the following ways:

- The service ensures all relevant staff, trainees and volunteers are Garda vetted prior to commencing work with our service and re-vetted every three years.
- Adhering to the procedures set out for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers in Trinity College Dublin's Child Protection Policy.
- Parameters of confidentiality are explained to service users – students are requested to sign a consent form on registration and counsellors explain confidentiality again at first session.
- All staff members complete online Child Protection Training through Tusla. Certificate on completion is added to personnel file.
- All staff, trainees and volunteers are fully briefed in child protection as is appropriate to their role, work and contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Providing effective management for staff, trainees and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Formal child protection training is organised every 3 years as part of CPD to update on legislation, policies and procedures. Training records will be kept on file.
- Any risk issues are discussed at weekly clinical case management meetings (or sooner if required) and with line manager as needed. S2S and SLD staff can discuss cases in the first instance with their Line Manager and they can consult with Counsellor on duty or directly with Director of Service/Deputy Director.
- Decisions are then made re procedure and reporting duties in consideration of risk issues to client and others and client wellbeing.
- If risk is identified, we will inform the service user of duty of care and procedures to report if indicated through assessment /meetings.
- We will complete the Child Protection Form attached to files as needed in accordance with SCS policies and procedures and follow Tusla protocols in making a report.
- Identifying of mandated reporter(s) working within SCS and communicating their legal responsibility of reporting in line with legislation.
- Sharing information and working with the College Designated Liaison Person as appropriate/required.

- Review of this safeguarding statement and accompanying policies and procedures every 2 years, or sooner if necessary due to service changes or changes in legislation or national policy.

Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and how these risks are mitigated.

	Risk identified	Risk mitigation
1	Disclosure of physical, emotional, sexual abuse in session by a service user.	Explain parameters of confidentiality which are included in consent form. Complete child protection form. Discuss with line manager in case conference meeting. If appropriate, report to Tusla using online Tusla reporting tool.
2	New staff members, including new trainees, volunteers, interns.	Garda vetting completed before start date. Signed confidentiality agreement. Tusla Online Child protection training completed by all new staff (including trainees & volunteers). Induction re policy and procedures.
3	Awareness of students under the age of 18 attending services.	Explain parameters of confidentiality and that parents/guardians may need to be aware/informed of issues.
4	Student2Student supporters.	Sign confidentiality agreement. Tusla Online Child protection training completed. Trained to identify students at risk and report any issues to S2S Coordinator or Deputy Director of SCS. Access to supervision to discuss any client concern. Induction re policy and procedures.

Procedures

The following local procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services:

- Procedure for Garda Vetting of staff and volunteers.
- Procedure for induction and ongoing training of staff, trainees and volunteers in relation to Child Protection, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.*
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla.

In addition to the procedures listed above, the Service complies with all university-level procedures as outlined in the Child Protection Policy for Trinity College Dublin. This includes:

- The procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children.
- The procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child / young person / vulnerable adult availing of our service.

<https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/child-protection-policy.php>

Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed by 31st January 2025, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

For queries, please contact Jo Harney, Deputy Director, harneyjo@tcd.ie, or Trish Murphy, Director, trish.murphy@tcd.ie Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015 and SCS Designated Liaison Person.



Signed:
Trish Murphy, Director SCS

Date: 21/03/2023

*SCS will actively engage with and avail of the training organised by the Secretary's Office and provided by Barnardos. In addition, relevant staff members will be asked to familiarise themselves with the training information as provided for on the Tusla website.